FEBRUARY 1996 • VOLUME 3 • NO. 1

inks

CARTOON AND COMIC ART STUDIES

ISSN: 1071-9156

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
The publication of *INKS* is made possible in part through the generous support of Jean and Charles Schulz.

Advertising and Publishing Office. The Ohio State University Press, 1070 Carmack Road, Columbus, Ohio 43210-1002. Telephone (614) 292-6930. *INKS* (ISSN 1071-9156) is published tri-annually in February, May, and November by the Ohio State University Press. Margaret Starbuck, Managing Editor; Melodie McGrothers, Subscriptions Manager. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *INKS*, Ohio State University Press, 1070 Carmack Road, Columbus, Ohio 43210-1002.

Subscriptions. Patrons, $100 per year; libraries and other institutions, $40 per year; individuals, $20. Outside U.S. add $4. Single copy, $8. Checks should be made payable to the Ohio State University Press, 1070 Carmack Road, Columbus, Ohio 43210-1002. Claims for missing issues must be made within four months of publication date. Allow six weeks for address change.

INKS is indexed in *ARTbibliographies Modern*, *BHA/Bibliography of the History of Art*, and the *MLA International Bibliography*.

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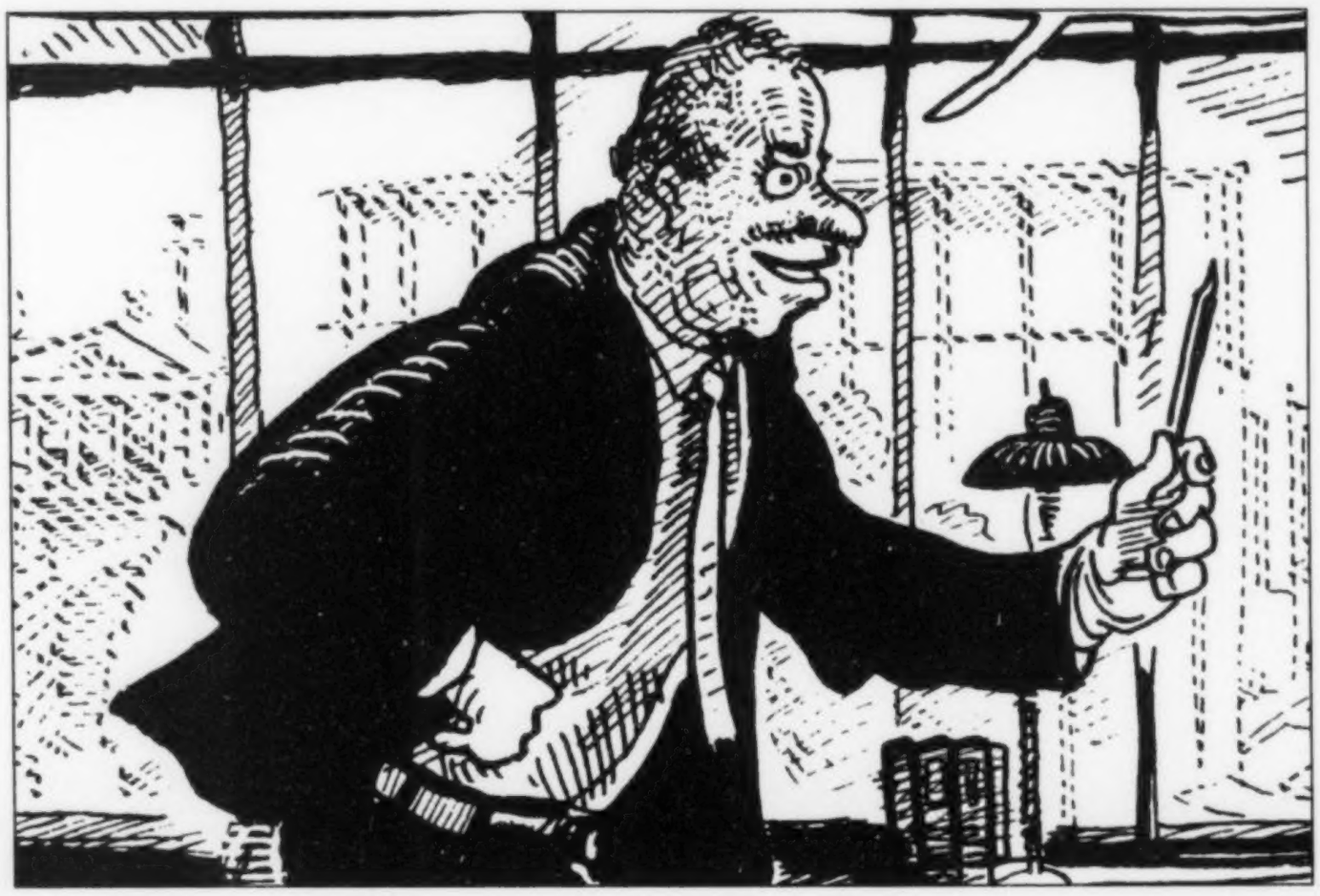

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FEBRUARY 1996 • VOLUME 3 • NO. 1

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William Gaines

and the Battle Over EC Comics

BY AMY KISTE NYBERG

Comic book publishers, when investigated by the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency in 1954, eagerly embraced the committee's recommendation that the industry "clean house" and adopt a self-regulatory code. For them, the code represented an immediate solution to the bad publicity being generated about comics. The lone dissenting voice was William M. Gaines, who never believed that EC horror comics harmed their young fans. This account chronicles his battle against government and industry forces that sought to regulate comic books in the mid-1950s.

William Gaines, best known for publishing a line of horror comics in the 1950s and for *MAD* magazine, inherited the company from his father, Max Gaines, who has been called by many the father of the modern comic book. It was Max Gaines, along with Harry I. Wildenburg, who came up with the idea to produce and sell comic books. He decided to start a line of educational and strictly juvenile titles under the imprint Educational Comics. Although he published "wholesome" comic books that parents approved of, they were not popular with young readers. In 1947, Max Gaines was killed in a boating accident, and his twenty-five-year-old son

This Johnny Craig cover featuring a severed head and a bloody ax was used by Senator Estes Kefauver at the comic book hearings to discredit Gaines' claims that his horror comics were in "good taste." ©1954 by Tiny Tot Comics, Inc. Used with permission from William M. Gaines, Agent, Inc. 1995

inherited a company that was $100,000 in debt. William Gaines, then an education student at New York University and newly divorced, moved in with his mother, finished his studies, and took over as head of the failing Educational Comics.[1]

It was an uncertain time to be in the comic book business. When the circulation of the super-hero comics that had been so popular during the war dropped off, publishers began to search for other genres that would appeal to their readers. Most of the comic book publishers had some background in the pulp magazine field, and it seemed only natural that the crime, mystery and horror themes that had served the pulps so well could be resurrected. By 1948, every fifth comic book sold was a crime comic. After the circulation of crime comics peaked, the industry added elements of horror and terror to keep reader interest high.[2]

One of William Gaines' first moves was to beef up his father's line of kiddie comics. He hired a new artist, Al Feldstein, and by the end of 1949, the company was producing crime and western comics.[3] His next step was to create, in 1950, a new line of horror comics. The company changed its name from Educational Comics to Entertaining Comics as *Crypt of Terror*, *Haunt of Fear* and *Vault of Horror* joined the EC lineup. The new magazines sold well, and within a year EC's financial problems were over.[4] Each title offered a collection of eight-page stories that followed what Harvey Kurtzman described as the classic short-story form—the punch ending.[5]

The EC horror line, like all successful comic book ideas, was copied by other publishers, and by 1954 there were more than forty horror titles a month being published.[6] Two events that year would signal the beginning of the end for the company that Gaines built. One was the publication of *Seduction of the Innocent*, an attack on the comic book industry by Dr. Fredric Wertham, a New York psychiatrist who, convinced that comic books were a contributing factor in juvenile delinquency, had been campaigning for legislation restricting the sale of comic books to children. The second was the announcement by the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency that it would hold hearings on the comic book industry as part of its broader mission to examine the effects of mass media on America's youth.

Throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, Wertham had written articles for both the popular press and professional journals and served as an expert witness for various governmental bodies investigating comic books as he worked to halt the

Psychiatrist Fredric Wertham testified before the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency that the use of the word "spick" in the EC story "The Whipping" encouraged racial hatred. Gaines countered that the story actually preached tolerance. ©1954 by L. L. Pub. Co., Inc. Used with permission from William M. Gaines, Agent, Inc. 1995

sale of comic books to children under sixteen. His campaign had resulted in little legislative activity. With his book, Wertham clearly hoped to rekindle interest in state and federal legislation against comic books. *Seduction of the Innocent* was written primarily to alert parents and others that crime and horror comics existed and were read by children. With public sentiment behind him, Wertham felt legislators would have to heed his calls for regulation of the comic book industry.

Seduction of the Innocent included graphic descriptions of the sex and violence found in comic book pages, complete with illustrations. The illustrations Wertham chose were single panels presented out of context, but they were powerful images nonetheless. Among the illustrations were several from EC publications. Wertham did not identify any of the publishers when he reprinted their work, but it was not difficult to track down the sources of the panels excerpted in *Seduction of the Innocent*.

Public response to Wertham's book prompted the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency to begin their investigation of the mass media with the comic book industry. In his opening remarks at the hearings on 21 April 1954, the chairman of the committee, Senator Robert Hendrickson, remarked: "From the mail received by the subcommittee, we are aware that thousands of American parents are greatly concerned about the possible detrimental influences certain types of crime and horror comic books have upon their children."[7]

The committee compiled a list of witnesses to testify at the hearings that included experts on children and delinquency, publishers, and distributors. The hearings were originally scheduled for just two days. Gaines appeared on a tentative list of witnesses and was scheduled to testify 21 April before the committee right before lunch. Wertham was to follow after lunch.[8] Gaines said he contacted the committee and volunteered to testify after his business manager, Lyle Stuart, suggested that someone should go before the committee to testify in favor of comic books.[9] On 19 April, the committee served Gaines with a subpoena ordering him to appear before them on 21 April. The committee

YES, THE SPANISH PEOPLE HAD MOVED IN! AND, ALTHOUGH HE AND HIS FRIENDS HAD TRIED HARD TO WHIP THE NEIGHBORHOOD INTO ACTION, THEY'D REMAINED... UNMOLESTED...

I TELL YOU, IT'S A CRYIN' SHAME! A BUNCH OF YELLOW-BELLIES, THAT'S WHAT THE REST OF THE GUYS AROUND HERE ARE...
YOU'LL SEE! THEY'LL WAKE UP!
YEAH! WHEN IT'S TOO LATE!

HE REMEMBERED HOW HE'D COMPLAINED TO HIS WIFE...

CAN YOU IMAGINE? ME AND WILLIE AND PHIL ARE THE ONLY GUYS THAT WANT TO DO ANYTHING. THE REST OF THE MEN IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD ARE SCARED STIFF.
PERHAPS IT'S BETTER THAT WAY, ED. MAYBE YOU'LL KEEP OUT OF TROUBLE...

HE REMEMBERED HOW AMY, HIS DAUGHTER, HAD COME HOME ONE NIGHT AND ANNOUNCED HAPPILY...

...AND HOW SHE'D LOOKED AT HIM AS IF SHE'D SEEN HER FATHER FOR THE FIRST TIME...

...HOW SHE'D CROSSED HER ARMS DEFIANTLY...

I'LL MAKE FRIENDS WITH WHOEVER I PLEASE, DADDY! WHEN I MEET A BOY, I'M NOT INTERESTED IN WHAT COUNTRY HIS ANCESTORS CAME FROM...
WELL, I AM, AND I'M TELLIN' YOU TO KEEP AWAY FROM SPICKS!

AND THEN HE REMEMBERED HOW, MONTHS LATER, HE'D COME HOME LATE FROM THE OFFICE ONE NIGHT... AND AS HE'D PASSED THAT HOUSE, HE'D SEEN...

THEY'D BEEN KISSING... ON THE STEPS... HIS DAUGHTER, AND ONE OF THEM... ONE OF THOSE SPICKS...

DADDY, I WANT YOU TO MEET LOUIS... LOUIS MARTINEZ. LOUIS... THIS IS MY FATHER...
I'M VERY PLEASED TO MEET YOU, MR...
GET HOME, AMY! GET HOME THIS MINUTE!

had also prepared a subpoena for Lyle Stuart that was never served, apparently as a back-up if the U.S. deputy marshall was unable to locate Gaines.[10] The committee staff also drew up background statements on each of the witnesses indicating what position the committee could expect each to take on comic books. Gaines' statement read:

> Mr. William M. Gaines is the owner and Managing Editor of "Entertaining Comics Group," located at 225 Lafayette Street, New York City, N.Y.
>
> Mr. Gaines is known for having taken a bankrupt comic book company and made it a financial success by injecting horror into the crime comics. Some of the publications by Mr. Gaines are known as "Mad", "The Haunt of Fear", "Weird Science Fantasy", "Vault of Horror", "Shock Suspense Stories."
>
> The type of advertising in the Entertaining Comics Group is handled primarily by the company itself and they built up their mailing list by such devices as correspondence to "The E. C. Fan Addict Club, Room 706, 225 Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y." (Individual membership, 25 cents - Charter membership for groups of 5 or more).
>
> On December 22, 1953, there appeared the following news item in the New York World-Telegram: "William Gaines said he would comply with the Massachusetts Attorney General George Finegold's demand to withdraw the comic "Panic" which contained a cartoon version of "The Night Before Christmas". The Attorney General had threatened criminal proceedings.[11]

During the morning session, Richard Clendenen, the executive director of the committee, presented a slide show and commentary about horror comics. Singled out in his presentation were the comic titles *Black Magic*, *Fight Against Crime*, *Mysterious Adventures*, *Crime Must Pay the Penalty*, *Strange Tales*, *The Haunt of Fear*, and *Shock SuspensStories*. The latter two were EC titles. Clendenen also showed the committee an advertisement published in the EC line, titled "Are You A Red Dupe?" The ad had been concocted in response to a four-part expose on the comic book industry that had just run in a Connecticut newspaper, the *Hartford Courant*. In one segment, reporter Irving M. Kravsow went to New York to interview publishers for an article that appeared 15 February 1954, with the headline: "Public Taste, Profit Used to Justify 'Horror' Comics." Kravsow interviewed two publishers, Stanley Morse, publisher of Gilmor Magazines, and William Gaines. In that article, Gaines defended his publication of

The ad "Are You a Red Dupe" was Gaines' response to his critics. He ran it in his comic books and mailed a copy to anyone who wrote him to complain about EC comics. ©1954 by Tiny Tot Comics, Inc. Used with permission from William M. Gaines, Agent, Inc. 1995

horror comics by explaining that profits from the horror comics allowed him to underwrite the expense of publishing the less popular educational comics. Gaines pulled out the issue of *Panic* with the Christmas satire that had earned the distinction of being "banned in Boston," remarking, "There's nothing wrong with it." The reporter quoted Gaines: "We try to entertain and educate. That's all there is to it. A lot of people have the idea we're a bunch of monsters who sit around drooling and dreaming up horror and filth. That's not true as you can see." The next paragraph of the news story described Gaines' office as "decorated with framed paintings of characters from the horror books such as witches and ogres."[12]

Six weeks after the expose ran, the *Courant* reported it was still receiving letters on the subject, all favorable. The only unfavorable letter the newspaper received was from Gaines himself, who accused the *Courant* of presenting a biased picture. *Editor & Publisher*, the newspaper industry's trade magazine, noted: "The same publisher hit back by running full page ads in his comic books declaring that the group most anxious to destroy comics are the Communists." The magazine also gave the *Courant's* response:

> Thus do the sellers of literary sewage justify their profits from the debauch of youth . . . But the jig is now up for the panderers of dirty comic books, and this Red scare is a frantic rear-guard action from a discredited and soon-to-be deactivated phase of publishing. Their end is in sight and they know it.[13]

The ad was the brainchild of Gaines and business manager Lyle Stuart. The ads ran in all of his comics, and Gaines sent a tearsheet of the Red Dupe ad to anyone who wrote Gaines attacking his comics. Said Gaines: "It was all pretty dopey. I made the ad out of devilishness. It was supposed to be a spoof, but it didn't come off that way."[14]

Clendenen described the ad to the committee and read the call to action at the bottom of the ad:

> Now there is a message down at the bottom and it ends up by saying, 'So the next time some joker gets up at a PTA meeting, or starts jabbering about 'the naughty comic books' at your local candy store, give him the once-over. We are not saying he is a

ARE YOU A RED DUPE?

IN THE TOWN OF GAZOOSKY IN THE HEART OF SOVIET RUSSIA, YOUNG MELVIN BLIZUNKEN - SKOVITCHSKY PUBLISHED A COMIC MAGAZINE...
COMIC SKVH
INSKY
...SO THEY CAME AND SMASHED HIS FOUR-COLOR PRESS...
...AND HUNG POOR MELVIN THE NEXT MORNING!

- HERE IN AMERICA, WE CAN **STILL** PUBLISH COMIC MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS, SLICKS, BOOKS AND THE BIBLE. WE DON'T **HAVE** TO SEND THEM TO A CENSOR FIRST. NOT **YET**...
- BUT THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE IN AMERICA WHO WOULD **LIKE** TO CENSOR... WHO WOULD **LIKE** TO SUPPRESS COMICS. IT ISN'T THAT THEY DON'T LIKE COMICS FOR **THEM!** THEY DON'T LIKE THEM FOR **YOU!**
- THESE PEOPLE SAY THAT **COMIC BOOKS** AREN'T AS GOOD FOR CHILDREN AS **NO** COMIC BOOKS, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. SOME OF THESE PEOPLE ARE NO-GOODS. SOME ARE DO-GOODERS. SOME ARE WELL-MEANING. AND SOME ARE JUST PLAIN MEAN.
- BUT WE ARE CONCERNED WITH AN AMAZING REVELATION. AFTER MUCH SEARCHING OF NEWSPAPER FILES, WE'VE MADE AN ASTOUNDING DISCOVERY:

THE GROUP MOST ANXIOUS TO DESTROY COMICS ARE THE COMMUNISTS!

- WE'RE SERIOUS! NO KIDDIN'! **HERE! READ THIS:**

THE [COMMUNIST] "DAILY WORKER" OF JULY 13, 1953 BITTERLY ATTACKED THE ROLE OF:

"...SO-CALLED 'COMICS' IN BRUTALIZING AMERICAN YOUTH, THE BETTER TO PREPARE THEM FOR MILITARY SERVICE IN IMPLEMENTING OUR GOVERNMENT'S AIMS OF WORLD DOMINATION, AND TO ACCEPT THE ATROCITIES NOW BEING PERPETRATED BY AMERICAN SOLDIERS AND AIRMEN IN KOREA UNDER THE FLAG OF THE UNITED NATIONS."

THIS ARTICLE ALSO QUOTED **GERSHON LEGMAN** (WHO CLAIMS TO BE A GHOST WRITER FOR **DR. FREDERICK WERTHAM**, THE AUTHOR OF A RECENT SMEAR AGAINST COMICS PUBLISHED IN **"THE LADIES HOME JOURNAL"**). THIS SAME **G. LEGMAN**, IN ISSUE #3 OF **"NEUROTICA,"** PUBLISHED IN AUTUMN 1948, WILDLY CONDEMNED COMICS, ALTHOUGH ADMITTING THAT:

"THE CHILD'S NATURAL CHARACTER... MUST BE DISTORTED TO FIT CIVILIZATION... FANTASY VIOLENCE WILL PARALYZE HIS RESISTANCE, DIVERT HIS AGGRESSION TO UNREAL ENEMIES AND FRUSTRATIONS, AND IN THIS WAY PREVENT HIM FROM REBELLING AGAINST PARENTS AND TEACHERS... THIS WILL SIPHON OFF HIS RESISTANCE AGAINST SOCIETY, AND **PREVENT REVOLUTION.**"

- SO THE **NEXT** TIME SOME JOKER GETS UP AT A P.T.A. MEETING, OR STARTS JABBERING ABOUT THE "NAUGHTY COMIC BOOKS" AT YOUR LOCAL CANDY STORE, GIVE HIM THE **ONCE-OVER**. WE'RE NOT SAYING HE **IS** A COMMUNIST! HE MAY BE INNOCENT OF THE WHOLE THING! HE MAY BE A **DUPE!** HE MAY NOT EVEN **READ** THE "DAILY WORKER"! IT'S JUST THAT HE'S **SWALLOWED** THE **RED BAIT... HOOK, LINE,** AND **SINKER!**

Crime SuspenStories, Oct.-Nov., 1954—Vol. 1, No. 25. Published Bi-Monthly by L. L. Publishing Co., Inc., at 225 Lafayette St., New York 12, N. Y. William Gaines, Editor. Albert B. Feldstein, Associate Editor. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. Subscription: 8 issues for $1 in the U. S. Elsewhere, $1.25. Entire contents copyrighted 1954 by L. L. Publishing Co., Inc. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by stamped return envelope. No similarity between any of the characters, names or persons appearing in this magazine with any of those living or dead is intended, and any such similarity is purely coincidental. Printed in U. S. A.

> Communist. He may be innocent of the whole thing! He may be a dupe! He may not even read the 'Daily Worker'! It is just that he's swallowed the Red bait—hook, line, and sinker."

Clendenen commented: "So at the other extreme some people would make out anyone who raised any question whatsoever about the comics was also giving out Red-inspired propaganda."[15] Senator Estes Kefauver asked that the copy of the ad be placed in the record of the hearings. Kefauver reacted very negatively to being accused, however indirectly, of being a Communist, especially with charges being made by his opponent in the Senate race that Kefauver was "coddling Communists."[16]

Clendenen's presentation apparently ran on longer than expected, pushing Gaines' testimony until after lunch. But after the committee reconvened, Wertham appeared to testify, and the committee moved him ahead of Gaines. Wertham, too, illustrated his presentation with examples from the various horror comics, many of them published by Gaines. Near the end of his testimony, he mentioned one EC story that he claimed was teaching "race hatred." He noted the story repeated a derogatory term for Puerto Ricans twelve times, and summed up the story this way: "What is the point of the story? The point of the story is that then somebody gets beaten to death."[17]

Then it was Gaines' turn. According to his biography, Gaines was on diet pills, and one side effect of the medication was that when the drug began to wear off, a depressing fatigue set in. Unfortunately, that happened about midway through Gaines' testimony. He recalls: "At the beginning, I felt that I was really going to fix those bastards, but as time went on I could feel myself fading away. I was like a punch-drunk fighter. They were pelting me with questions and I couldn't locate the answers."[18]

Gaines began his testimony by reading a statement he and Stuart had written the night before. He listed his father's contributions to the industry and pointed out that the industry employed thousands of writers, artists, engravers, and printers as well as providing millions of hours of entertainment for children. He then turned to the subject of horror comics, telling the committee: "I was the first publisher in these United States to publish horror comics. I am responsible, I started them."[19]

Gaines then took issue with the testimony given by Wertham, refuting the charges that his comic books preached racial intolerance. He argued that the story was designed to show the evils of race prejudice and mob violence, and concluded: "This is one of the most brilliantly written stories that I have ever had the pleasure to publish. I was very proud of it, and to find it being used in such a nefarious way made me quite angry."[20]

He tried to draw a distinction between the "messages" that were deliberately incorporated into the stories and the suggestion on the part of the committee that children might be picking up on other unintentional messages about the use of violence to solve problems. In defending his story "The Orphan," where an abused child kills her father and frames her mother for the murder in order to go live with a kindly aunt, Gaines said: "No message has been spelled out there. We were not trying to prove anything with that story. None of the captions said anything like 'If you are unhappy with your stepmother, shoot her.'"[21]

Trying another tack, Herbert Hannoch, the chief counsel for the committee, asked Gaines: "You think it does them (children) a lot of good to read these things?" to which Gaines replied, "I don't think it does them a bit of good, but I don't think it does them a bit of harm, either." Then Herbert Beaser, Hannoch's assistant, asked Gaines: "Is there any limit you can think of that you would not put in a magazine because you thought a child should not see or read about it?" Gaines said, "My only limits are bounds of good taste, what I consider good taste." With that statement, Gaines set himself up for what would be remembered as the "the most infamous passage of the closely watched hearings." Senator Kefauver joined the fray, holding aloft a Johnny Craig cover from *Crime SuspenStories* and remarking: "This seems to be a man with a bloody ax holding a woman's head up which has been severed from her body. Do you think that is in good taste?" Gaines had little choice but to answer: "Yes, sir; I do, for the cover of a horror comic."[22]

That exchange signaled the turning point in Gaines' testimony. Reidelbach notes, "Public sentiment turned decisively against the young publisher, as television and print news reports widely quoted the severed head exchange."[23] The front page story in the *New York Times* focused on that part of the hearings and carried the headline: "No Harm in Horror, Comics Issuer Says."[24] Gaines, of course, realized things had gone drastically wrong. His biographer notes he "left the courthouse in a state of shock" and "took to his bed for two days with a painfully knotted stomach, most likely psychosomatic."[25]

Gaines received a routine letter from the chairman of the subcommittee, Senator

Hendrickson, thanking him for his testimony. He fired back a reply, telling Hendrickson that the approach of the committee was neither impartial nor scientific and his treatment was unfair. He complained that he had been scheduled to testify in the morning, was told he would be the first witness in the afternoon, and was "shunted aside" when Dr. Wertham showed up and forced to wait until 4 p.m. before he testified. He noted his four-minute statement was rudely interrupted, commenting, "I need not tell you that this was far from the kid-glove patience accorded Dr. Wertham—who spoke for hours on end—much of his contribution being obvious gush designed solely to increase the sale of his book." He continued: "The headline-seeking carnival staged by your Committee has given fuel to those in our society who want to tar with the censor's brush. As a result, my business together with the entire comics industry has been severely damaged. Since this was so obviously an objective of your Committee, I trust it will give you some satisfaction."[26]

In a draft of a reply that was never sent, Senator Hendrickson wrote: "For some time I had before me your letter attacking the integrity of the Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency and charging it with bias in its investigation of the comic book industry. Had opportunity offered, I would have replied to it on the floor of the Senate." Hendrickson noted he did not believe Gaines spoke for the entire industry: "While you are falsely charging us with attempting to wreck an industry, other publishers and distributors are giving concrete evidence of the sincerity of their concern for youth by discontinuing the publishing and distribution of objectionable comics."[27]

The speech Hendrickson alluded to was written but never delivered. In that speech, Hendrickson wrote: "Recently, I received a vicious letter from one of the so-called comic book publishers who attacked the integrity of this subcommittee and who charged, among other things, that we are out to destroy the comic book industry."[28] He summarized the testimony Gaines had given at the hearings, concluding: "This is the calm, deliberate thinking of a so-called 'comics' book publisher who attacks a United States Senate Subcommittee that is under mandate to explore and shed light upon possible causes of juvenile delinquency in the United States." Next, Hendrickson took Gaines to task for encouraging youngsters to write to the Subcommittee in defense of comics. Hendrickson wrote: "Now, I do not object to youngsters writing to their Congressmen. In fact, I welcome it. But I do object to his inferring in this bulletin to thousands of young people that Congressional investigations are conducted because 'November is coming.' And I most strongly object to his deliberately misinforming these youngsters as to the opinion about crime comics of authorities in this field, including Doctor Robert H. Felix, Director of our National Institute of Mental Health. It's malicious, Mr. President, to attempt to discredit the integrity of the Senate in the eyes of American youth." Hendrickson concluded the draft of his speech by saying that no attack upon the subcommittee "by a publisher whose own product evoked consternation and revulsion at our hearings" would deter the committee from continuing its investigation into any facet of the media that may be contributing to the "juvenile delinquency scourge."

The bulletin Hendrickson was referring to was *The Fan-Addict Club Bulletin*, which began in November 1953 and was mailed to nine thousand charter members. The bulletin was "friendly, newsy, and innocuous. Births and marriages among EC's staff and free lancers were announced, and a trading post for old EC comics was set up." In the June 1954 issue of the bulletin, mailed to seventeen thousand subscribers, the address of the subcommittee was printed and fans were urged to begin a letter-writing campaign.[29] The *Bulletin* began: "THIS IS AN EMERGENCY BULLETIN! This is an appeal for action!" In describing the threat, the bulletin noted: "The congressmen get frightened . . . November is coming! They start an investigation. This wave of hysteria has seriously threatened the very existence of the whole comic magazine industry." That hysteria, the newsletter argued, is caused by a small minority who oppose comics, adding: "The voice of the majority . . . you who buy comics, read them, enjoy them, and are not harmed by them . . . has not been heard!" It urged the readers to write "a nice, polite letter" and encouraged youngsters to get their parents to write or add a P.S. to the letter "as the Senate Subcommittee may not have much respect for the opinions of minors." The appeal was signed "Your grateful editors (for the whole E.C. Gang)."[30]

The same plea was published as an editorial that ran in the EC line, and the *Bulletin* and editorials generated an estimated three hundred to four hundred letters from children, teenagers and adults.[31] The subcommittee kept a separate tally of those who mentioned the EC Fan-Addict Club in their letters. The list compiled included the name of the letter writer, state of origin, their age (if known), whether the letter favored or opposed horror comics, and relevant comments (usually who else in the family or neighborhood favored horror

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ADDRESS _____
CITY _____
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* (NO 25¢ MEMBERSHIP WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER JUNE 1, 1954)

William Gaines used the *EC Fan-Addict Club Bulletin* to encourage youngsters to write to the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency in support of comic book reading. The senators found sinister meaning in the phrase "fan-addict." ©1954 by L. L. Pub. Co., Inc. Used with permission from William M. Gaines, Agent, Inc. 1995

comics). On the list were 217 names of people writing in support of horror comics and twenty-seven who were opposed to horror comics, but liked other comics.[32]

The major themes of these letters were that comic books do not cause juvenile delinquency, that crime comics actually teach children that crime is bad, and that readers of comics should decide for themselves what to read. While there is a smattering of postcards in the files, most are long, handwritten letters. In some cases, the parent obviously wrote or typed the letter for the child to sign, and many parents followed the suggestion in the editorial, adding postscripts to their children's letters. Occasionally, a letter would be signed by an entire neighborhood group of children. They were mailed to the subcommittee in two waves. The first wave of letters came in response to the call to action in the *Bulletin* and were from younger readers. The second wave resulted from the editorials in the EC line of comics and included many adult readers.

Many of the letters rephrased the information given in the editorial, quoting the experts and attacking the so-called "do-gooders" who wanted to rid the country of comic books. But other letters were more clearly the opinions of the writers. One young man from Idaho wrote the subcommittee: "Please do not crucify my favorite pass-time [*sic*] . . . How can anyone truthfully say that reading a magazine actually gives them an urge or an idea to kill? With all of the 'love magazines' being printed, I am surprised we aren't all professional lovers, if that's the case."[33] One mother offered her own explanation for the anti-comic book sentiment: "I think that the only thing they have against these comics is just that they can't get the kids to help around the house because they are too interested in the comics and that the mothers get tired of picking up a bunch of books."[34] A young woman wrote that the comic books were the only entertainment that she and her young daughter could afford, and "the most enjoyment for us is to go to bed early in the evening and read a funny book or two."[35] A thirteen-year-old boy asked the senators to "let the kids read what they want and what they like" and concluded, "Besides, if you do take them off (the stands), you'll have every kid in the country on your back."[36] The impact of the Senate investigation was mentioned in quite a few letters by readers who were no longer able to find the comics they used to read on the newsstands; retailers had removed the controversial titles from their racks.

The letter writing campaign, however, was a lost cause long before the letters even reached the Senate subcommittee. Shortly after the hearings concluded in June 1954, the comic book publishers set to work on a self-regulatory code they hoped would appease critics and derail efforts to get legislation passed to regulate comic book content. Gaines may have inadvertently set this chain of events into motion as well. In May, he sent out a letter to the publishers urging them to organize and launch a public relations campaign to counter the bad publicity comic books were receiving and suggested involving the American Civil Liberties Union in the industry's battle against censorship. He began to meet individually with each publisher. The comic book business was highly competitive, and the men who ran it were not friends with one another, but they saw the wisdom of what Gaines was proposing and agreed to a meeting.[37]

Gaines' idea was to hire experts in the field of juvenile delinquency, and he had in mind the husband and wife research team of Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck of Harvard. They published an important study in the 1930s, *One Thousand Juvenile Delinquents*. In it they suggested that family disintegration was the most important factor in studying juvenile delinquency. Their two postwar works, *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency* and *Delinquents in the Making*, develop their theories about family environment, rather than external influences, as a cause of delinquency.[38]

It was clear from the Senate subcommittee hearings that little scientific research had been done on the effects of comic book reading on children. Gaines believed that a research study done by the Gluecks would provide a definitive answer to the question of effects, vindicate the comic book industry, and business could continue as usual. But the other publishers were not interested in what they perceived as a long-term solution. They desired more immediate action in order to stem the tide of negative public opinion. Their solution, modeled on what had worked for other media, especially the film industry, was to adopt a code. While the exact wording of the code would need to be worked out, the consensus was that the horror and terror books would have to be sacrificed as proof that the industry meant business. Gaines would note years later:

> And it was always an ironic thing to me that I was the guy who started the damn association and they turned around and the first thing they did was ban the words weird, horror and terror from any comic magazine . . . those were my three big words.[39]

THEY CAUGHT STEVE A FEW DAYS LATER OUTSIDE CHICAGO AND SHIPPED HIM BACK TO STAND TRIAL... ALONG WITH MOMMY...

...FOR THE *MALICIOUS* AND *PRE-MEDITATED MURDER* OF *SAMUEL JOHNSON*... AND THE STATE WILL *PROVE*, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY, THAT IT WAS MURDER COMMITTED OUT OF *NEED*... OUT OF *DESIRE*... *COLD* AND *CALCU-LATING*...

THE TRIAL WAS SHORT AND SWEET. THEY CALLED ME TO THE WITNESS STAND AND I TOLD THEM WHAT I'D SEEN...

DADDY WAS JUST COMING UP THE *WALK* WHEN *THEY CAME OUT*. HE SAW THEIR *BAGS*. HE WAS *SO MAD*. AND *THEN*... SOB... *THE SHOT*... SOB...

AND THE JURY BROUGHT IN THEIR VERDICT AFTER TWO HOURS...

WE FIND THE DEFENDANTS *GUILTY AS CHARGED!*

IN *OUR* STATE, *MURDERERS* DIE IN THE *ELECTRIC CHAIR*. *MOMMY* WENT *FIRST*...

.. *THEN STEVE*...

SO LIKE I *SAID* IN THE *BEGINNING*... *EVERY-THING* WORKED OUT *SWELL*. I LIVE IN A *NICE HOUSE NOW*, WITH *NICE FURNITURE*. I HAVE ALL THE *TOYS* I WANT AND ALL THE *LOVE* I NEED. YOU SEE, THE *COURT SENT ME TO LIVE WITH AUNT KATE*...

...WHICH IS JUST THE WAY I'D *HOPED* IT WOULD WORK OUT WHEN *I SHOT DADDY* FROM THE *FRONT BEDROOM WINDOW* WITH THE GUN I *KNEW* WAS IN THE *NIGHT TABLE* AND WENT DOWNSTAIRS AND PUT THE GUN IN MOMMY'S HAND AND STARTED THE CRYING ACT...

THE END

At the organizational meeting of the Comics Magazine Association of America 17 August 1954, the members of the new association heard a report on the activities of the Special Committee on Organization, headed by John Goldwater of Archie Comics. That special committee recommended the association be empowered to establish and enforce a code governing the industry in editorial and advertising content of comics magazines, that a symbol or seal be designed, and that a public relations campaign be undertaken to inform the public, the wholesalers and the newsstand dealers about the new steps taken for self-regulation. A code had already been drafted by the Special Committee but would not be made public until the association selected a "czar" to oversee its enforcement.[40]

When Fredric Wertham turned down the job, the association selected Judge Charles F. Murphy and set the announcement for 16 September 1954. Murphy would take charge 1 October, and the publishers promised a code would be in place by 15 November.[41] Two days earlier, knowing the formation of the CMAA would mean the end of his EC horror comics, Gaines announced he was discontinuing his line of comics "because this seems to be what American parents want." In reality, Gaines was told by his wholesalers that they simply would not handle the controversial EC horror titles any longer. To take their place, Gaines introduced seven titles he labeled his "New Direction" comics. They were *Aces High*, *Extra!*, *Impact*, *Piracy*, *Valor*, *MD*, and *Psychoanalysis*.[42]

Initially, Gaines refused to join the comics association. He was not the only holdout. In a statement issued after the CMAA was formed, Dell Comics publisher George Delacorte noted that his line of comics had always been above reproach and he had no desire for the Dell Comics name "to be used as an umbrella for some of the inferior products" available. Gilbertson, publishers of *Classics Illustrated* comics, maintained that their publications were not really comic books, but adaptations of literary classics. The distributors, however, aware of Gaines' notoriety, refused to handle the EC line without the "Seal of Approval" on the cover, and Gaines joined the association.

"The Orphan" was the EC story that was most frequently attacked by Gaines' critics. Some have argued that what upset adults most was the last panel of the tale, in which the idea of childhood innocence is destroyed by the unexpected ending. ©1954 by Tiny Tot Comics, Inc. Used with permission from William M. Gaines, Agent, Inc. 1995

The relationship was a stormy and short-lived one. Gaines was clearly unhappy with the way the association was being run. He met with several of the publishers individually, but they were apparently unwilling to buck the association. He pushed for greater accountability on the part of the association; the association agreed to meet more frequently "so members could be apprised of the activities of the association."[43] He publicly attacked the association, despite having an agreement with the CMAA not to do so.[44]

In August 1955, Lyle Stuart wrote a letter to James Bobo, who was currently serving as general counsel to the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, asking the senators to investigate the CMAA, claiming the "autocratic, self-appointed group has subverted the good intentions of the Kefauver Committee into a monopolistic instrument" and suggesting that the association was working to destroy small publishers. Stuart told Bobo in his letter that there were publishers willing to testify about what the association had done to squeeze them out of business. The letter to Bobo was inspired, in part, by the latest dispute between Gaines and the CMAA reviewers. Stuart explained:

> Just today we had a story turned down. It was a harmless story for a science-fiction magazine. But in the story an automaton thinks and talks. Nobody is hurt. There is no violence. But the story was turned down because to suggest that an automaton can think is contrary to Judge Murphy's religious beliefs that only man was granted a soul and the ability to think by his Creator.
>
> The complete story was turned down. And this was a substitute story for another which was turned down. Thus, the book has been delayed to the point where we cannot bill our advertisers for the full rate because of the delay . . . and our art and editorial costs now make even a break-even sale seem unlikely.[45]

Another version of the story is that the substitute story, "Judgment Day," which was a morality tale about bigotry on other planets, featured a black astronaut with sweat on his brow. The code enforcer demanded the sweat be removed, apparently believing the depiction could constitute a violation of the code's prohibition against ridicule or attack on any racial group. Gaines refused, printed the story anyway, and promptly announced he was discontinuing all his comic books. He would instead turn all his attention to *MAD*, which, since it was now published in a magazine format, was exempt from the scrutiny of the CMAA.[46] The

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association included this terse comment in its minutes of 14 December 1955: "On motion by Mr. Liebowitz [Jack Liebowitz of DC Comics], it was decided to accept the oral resignation of Entertaining Comics, made on Oct. 25, 1955, and the executive secretary was instructed to notify this firm of this decision."[47]

The battle over EC Comics was officially ended. ●

NOTES

1. Maria Reidelbach, *Completely MAD: A History of the Comic Book and Magazine* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1991), 10-12.

2. Mike Benton, *Horror Comics: The Illustrated History* (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing, 1991), 9.

3. Frank Jacobs, *The Mad World of William Gaines* (Secaucus, NJ: Lyle Stuart, 1972), 64, 73.

4. Mike Benton, *Superhero Comics of the Golden Age: An Illustrated History* (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing, 1992), 17; Reidelbach, *Completely MAD*, 6.

5. Harvey Kurtzman, *From Aargh to Zap: Harvey Kurtzman's Visual History of the Comics* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1991), 28.

6. Kurtzman, *From Aargh to Zap*, 25.

7. Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, *Juvenile Delinquency (Comic Books): Hearings before the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency*, 83rd Cong., 2d sess., 21-22 April and 4 June 1954, 2.

8. "Tentative Proposed Witness List," 16 April 1954, Records of the Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, Committee on the Judiciary, 1953-1961, Box 171, National Archives, Washington, DC.

9. Reidelbach, *Completely MAD*, 26; Jacobs, *The Mad World*, 105-106.

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11. Background statements, Records of the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, Box 170, National Archives.

12. Pamphlet, "Depravity For Children — 10 Cents A Copy!" from the *Hartford Courant*, Records of the Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, Box 167, National Archives.

13. Charles L. Towne, "Hartford Is Aroused By Comic Book Expose," *Editor & Publisher*, 10 April 1954, 11.

14. Jacobs, *The Mad World*, 104-15.

15. Hearings, *Juvenile Delinquency (Comic Books)*, 58-59.

16. Joseph Bruce Gorman, *Kefauver: A Political Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 176.

17. Hearings, *Juvenile Delinquency (Comic Books)*, 95.

18. Jacobs, *The Mad World*, 107.

19. Hearings, *Juvenile Delinquency (Comic Books)*, 98.

20. Hearings, *Juvenile Delinquency (Comic Books)*, 99.

21. Hearings, *Juvenile Delinquency (Comic Books)*, 101.

22. Hearings, *Juvenile Delinquency (Comic Books)*, 109.

23. Reidelbach, *Completely MAD*, 28.

24. Peter Kihss, "No Harm in Horror, Comics Issuer Says." *New York Times*, 22 April 1954, p. 1, col. 1.

25. Jacobs, *The Mad World*, 110.

26. William Gaines to Robert Hendrickson, 21 May 1954, Records of the Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, Box 168, National Archives.

27. Draft of letter from Robert Hendrickson to William Gaines (not sent), undated, Records of the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, Box 168, National Archives.

28. This remark and the quotations from it that follow may be found in Robert Hendrickson, draft of speech to the Senate (not delivered), 7 July 1954, Robert Hendrickson Papers, Box 74, Folder titled "U.S. Senate Committee: Judiciary Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, Reports, Misc.," Syracuse University Library, Syracuse, NY.

29. Reidelbach, *Completely MAD*, 24, 28.

30. *The National E.C. Fan-Addict Club Bulletin*, No. 3, June 1954, Records of the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, Box 168, National Archives.

31. Robert Hendrickson to Mrs. Mario Levi, 29 September 1954, Records of the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, Box 169, National Archives.

32. "Survey of E.C. Fan-Addict Club Letters," undated, Records of the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, Box 211, National Archives.

33. James Beard to Senate Subcommittee, 26 September 1954, Records of the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, Box 169, National Archives.

34. Mrs. L. D. Thomas to Senate Subcommittee, 23 September 1954, Records of the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, Box 169, National Archives.

35. Ruth Scheffer to Senate Subcommittee, 8 September 1954, Records of the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, Box 169, National Archives.

36. Kenneth White to Senate Subcommittee, 7 July 1954, Records of the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, Box 169, National Archives.

37. Lyle Stuart, remarks at William Gaines' memorial service, 5 May 1992, transcribed by John Tebbel.

38. Gilbert, *Cycle of Outrage*, 132-133.

39. William Gaines, interview by John Tebbel, New York, New York, 4 August 1986.

40. Minutes of the organizational meeting of the Comics Magazine Association of America, 17 August 1954, CMAA files.

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43. Minutes of a special meeting, 26 April 1955, CMAA files.

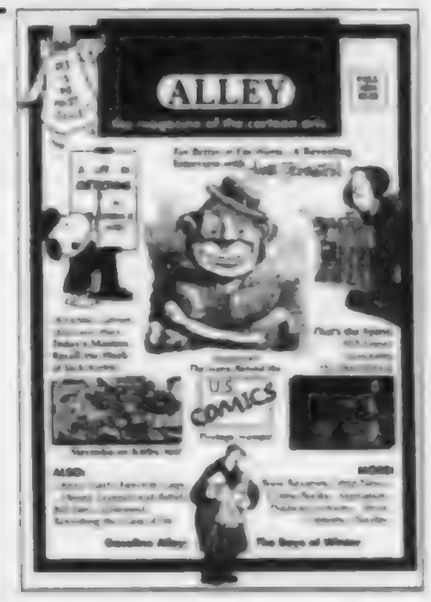
44. Minutes of Board of Directors meeting, 23 June 1955, CMAA files.

45. Lyle Stuart to James H. Bobo, 11 August 1955, Records of the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, Box 168, National Archives.

46. Reidelbach, *Completely MAD*, 34-35.

47. Minutes of Board of Directors of CMAA, 14 December 1955, CMAA files.

HAPPY 100!



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A Short History of *Puck*, *Illustrirtes Humoristisches Wochenblatt* (1876-1898)

BY RICHARD SAMUEL WEST

If you were a publisher in mid-nineteenth century America, one of the fastest and surest ways to lose money was to start an American humor magazine. During the thirty-six years that elapsed between the founding of the London *Punch* (1841) and the founding of the New York *Puck* (1877), dozens of men answered the siren's call to make America laugh and all became embittered or indebted by the effort. Most of the humor magazines from this period died in infancy. Some got off to a good enough start, but then would perish after only a few years. The handful that lived beyond their tenth birthdays was a sickly bunch, with modest circulations and even less influence.

Then came Keppler and Schwarzmann's *Puck*. There was nothing modest about it. It became a political power broker, striking fear in the hearts of its enemies and giving comfort to its friends. Along the way, it made its owners wealthy beyond their wildest dreams. But *Puck's* success was not immediate. In fact, in its first few years, it seemed destined to follow in the fatal footsteps of its predecessors. That it survived those lean years at all was due completely to the fact that its prosperous brother publication, *Puck, Illustrirtes Humoristisches Wochenblatt*, a humor magazine for German-Americans, paid most of the bills. Much has been written about the English-language *Puck*. Quite little, however, has been written about its stalwart German brother. This is the German-language *Puck's* story, a story that properly begins in St. Louis in 1869.

In that burgeoning city on the Mississippi in that year we find Joseph Keppler, an artist by training, an actor by disposition and necessity. Having emigrated the year before from his native Vienna with his wife and brother-in-law, he was having difficulty finding work. He fell in with a distinguished crowd of journalists, writers, and artists who gathered at Fritz Roeslin's bookstore in the German quarter. One of those drinking buddies was Heinrich Binder, a journalist and Vienna native who had already been in America for twenty years.[1]

Binder, impressed with Keppler's drawing ability sold his interest in a feeble German-language daily and joined with Keppler to launch a humor magazine for the German-American community entitled, *Die Vehme, Illustrirtes Wochenblatt fur Scherz und Ernest* (The Star Chamber: An Illustrated Weekly Paper in Fun and Earnest). Binder and Keppler undoubtedly had national pretensions for their comic weekly, in that all of America's largest cities had German-speaking enclaves, but it is probable that *Die Vehme* saw little circulation outside of Missouri. This was no shame because the magazine really did not do justice to the talents of either man. The cartoons were often poorly composed and of little import. The pages of prose and poetry had a cobbled-together, amateurish look about them. Sometimes, pages were even bound upside down. It never attained a circulation greater than 2,500, and this number is probably exaggerated. Apparently in an effort to evade creditors, Keppler and Binder sank *Die Vehme* on its first birthday and almost immediately began another humor magazine, entitled *Frank und Frei*. But that misbegotten weekly was born very weak indeed and seems not to have survived more than a few months.[2]

Binder returned to daily journalism, but, as we shall see, not forever. Keppler, meanwhile, suffered a host of problems. He could not find steady work as an actor or an artist. At one point he even returned to pastry baking, a craft his father had taught him twenty-five years earlier when he was just a boy. Then, his wife Minna died. They had acted on the Austrian stage together and they had two children together, both of whom had died in infancy. For Keppler, it was a devastating blow; only his buoyant and sociable nature saved him from chronic despair.[3]

In March 1871, Keppler again attempted a German-language humor magazine, christening it *Puck*. This time, his partner was one Friedrich Herold, a twenty-seven-year-old German-born journalist. Together they worked hard for *Puck's* success. And, in truth, it was a more polished effort than *Die Vehme* all the way around. But it was limping along at a circulation of 1,000 when Herold died in August. Keppler's acting talents undoubtedly helped him keep the editor-less afloat for a few more months (perhaps with help from his new father-in-law, a St. Louis businessman of some means, whose teenage daughter Keppler had married in June). But the charade of publishing a magazine that was not making money and that did not have an editor could only go on for so long. In November, Keppler sold out to journalist Louis Willich and washed his hands of his little "merry wanderer"—or so he thought.[4]

Willich made a number of changes in the magazine, some good, some unfortunate. But he soon realized that a *Puck* without Keppler was decidedly unPuckish. He lured Keppler back into the fold in early 1872 by dazzling him with his

ambitious plans; the establishment of an English-language *Puck* to be published in tandem with the German-language edition. Willich reasoned that Keppler's cartoons were too good to be restricted to the German-American community. Moreover, an English-language edition would defray a good deal of the costs previously borne by the German-language edition alone. But the English edition, launched in March, proved to be even more feeble than its German brother. The strain of financing two editions crushed the small publishing company before the end of the summer.[5]

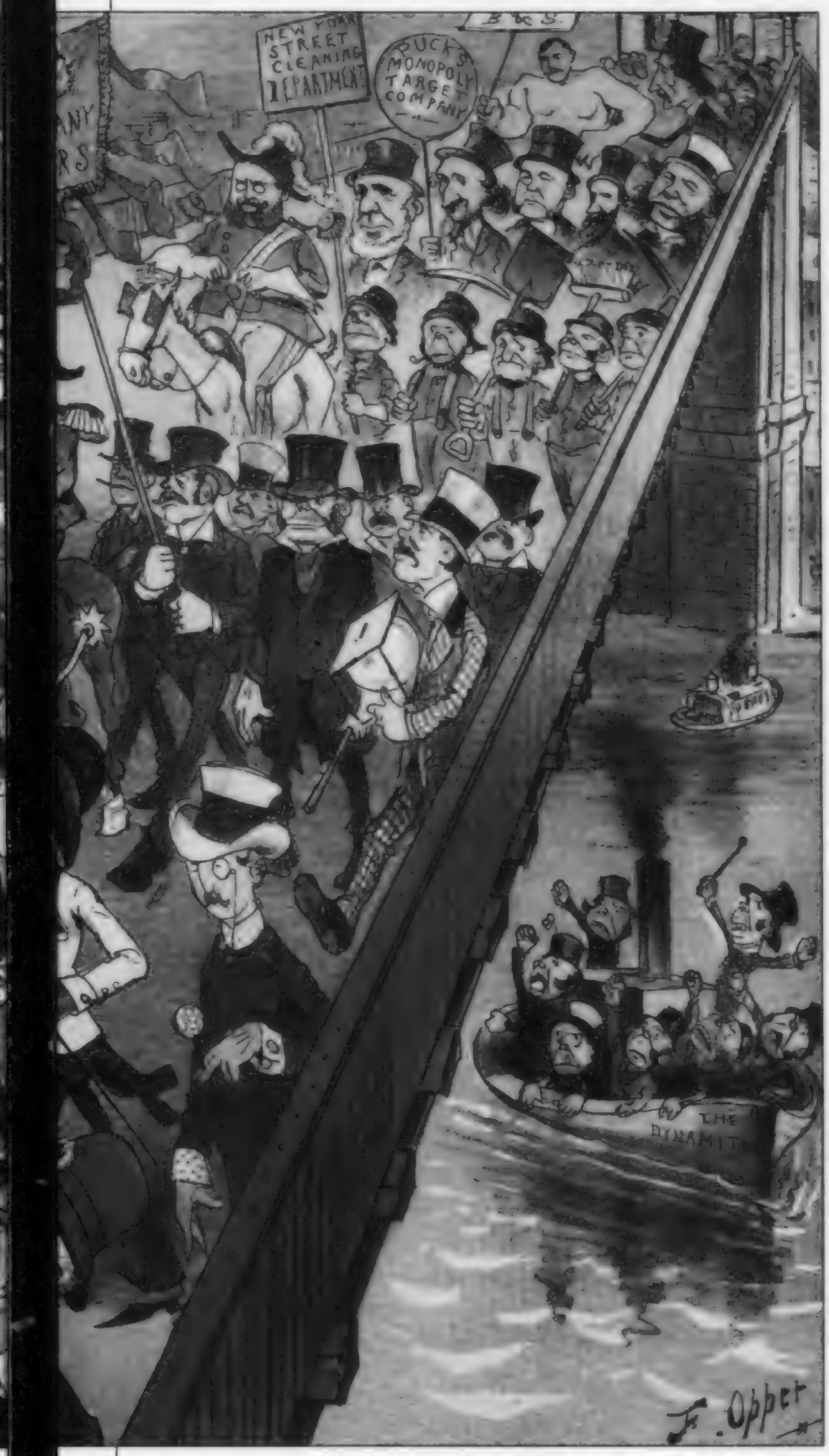
Keppler had been laying plans for an escape from St. Louis well before *Puck's* final issue. Frank

Leslie, the titan of illustrated American journalism, had accepted for publication in his *Illustrated Newspaper* a drawing that Keppler did in June of the St. Louis Sangerfest; Keppler seems to have decided soon after that to move his little family to New York and attempt success there.[6]

He settled in New York in September and, by year's end, as planned, was a full-time employee of Leslie's Publishing Company. Leslie was well-known to millions of Americans as the founder and owner of a shelf-full of popular magazines, beginning with *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, *Frank Leslie's Lady Magazine*, *Frank Leslie's Chimney Corner* (a story magazine), and *Frank Leslie's Budget of Fun* (a humor magazine). He was also well-known in the German-American community as publisher of his *Illustrierte Zeitung*, which, with a circulation of between thirty and forty thousand, was the leading German-language illustrated weekly in America.[7]

Though the *Illustrierte Zeitung* reused the original wood engravings that were made for *Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, it contained much original prose content. Hence, within Leslie's publishing house, there existed an enclave of German-speaking employees involved in all aspects of publishing, from writing and editing, through typesetting and composition, to printing and distribution. One of the most important German-Americans at Leslie's was Adolph Schwarzmann, foreman of Leslie's print shop and reputed "guiding spirit" behind the *Illustrierte Zeitung*. Schwarzmann had come to America in 1858 as a teenager and within a few years began working in Leslie's print shop. His diligence and organizational skills led to his swift rise through the ranks. By the end of the 1860s, Schwarzmann was in charge of all of Leslie's printing. Keppler was introduced to Schwarzmann his first day on the job. They formed a friendship that would last the rest of their lives.[8]

Keppler's tenure at Leslie's was checkered. While he contributed regularly to Leslie's humor magazines (*The Budget of Fun*, *The Jolly Joker*, and, for six months in 1873, *Tag Für Tag*), his work appeared in spurts in the *Newspaper/Zeitung*. Nearly two years elapsed before Leslie began spotlighting Keppler's talents by publishing his cartoons on a regular basis in the *Newspaper/Zeitung*.[9] Sometime in 1875, Schwarzmann resigned from Leslie's and purchased part interest in the *New-Yorker Musik-Zeitung*, located in a ramshackle three-story building at 13 N. William St. on New York's lower East side. The *Musik-Zeitung* was a weekly devoted to the New York music and opera scene. When Schwarzmann bought into it, the ten-year-old publication, which called itself the only American professional magazine published in



Frederick Opper's version of the opening of the Brooklyn Bridge from *Puck, Illustrirtes Humoristisches Wochenblatt*, 23 May 1883, 568-569.

German, had reached its all-time-high circulation figure of 2,416. The *Musik-Zeitung* was no publishing empire, but Schwarzmann seemed to think it could be the foundation for one.[10] Who convinced whom is unclear, but by the spring of 1876, Keppler, with Schwarzmann's backing, was preparing to make his third attempt at founding a German-American humor magazine. In May, Keppler took out a copyright on the name and image of Puck. The following month Schwarzmann bought out his partner in the publication of the *Musik-Zeitung*.

The German-American humor magazine field was not an empty one. *Der Freischutz*, edited and published by Hermann Rost, had been around for ten years. It was an illustrated eight-page weekly the size of *Frank Leslie's Illustrierte Zeitung*. It could not be termed a success—it had fewer subscribers than the *Musik-Zeitung*—but it diligently hung in there year after year. Also in the field was *Schnedderedengg*, a weekly published by J. B. Collin, who also published the English-language humor magazine *Wild Oats*. Other competitors included humor magazines published in Germany and Austria that circulated widely in the German-American community, but they suffered from datedness and an almost entirely European focus.[11]

In August, Keppler and Schwarzmann signed an agreement of co-partnership. Each would contribute $1,000 to form *Puck's* initial working capital (though Keppler apparently never raised that amount) and split all profits 50-50. Schwarzmann would direct operations and publish the weekly as economically as possible. Keppler would turn over his copyright on the name and figure of *Puck* to the partnership. He would also provide cartoons, for which he would be paid $40 a week above his 50% share of the profits, provided there were any.[12]

The salaried position of editor went to thirty-two-year-old Leopold Schenck. This German emigre had come to America the same year as Keppler had. Keppler probably made Schenck's acquaintance when the young writer was working at the *St. Louis Westliche Post*. After coming to New York in the early seventies, Schenck co-wrote a play with a young New Yorker named Sydney Rosenfeld, who had worked briefly as an employee at Leslie's Publishing House and was an acquaintance of Keppler and Schwarzmann. From mid-August to mid-September, the trio labored to assemble the first *Puck*. The new magazine's nameplate featured the mascot from Keppler's St. Louis *Puck*, somewhat matured, riding a shooting star across the sky, gripping a lithocrayon and flogging whip in each hand. In the shower of light that followed the star was the magazine's name. For the cover of the issue dated simply September (it would be published on the 23rd), Keppler drew a cover cartoon that also featured *Puck*, this time on a stage, handing out subscriptions to both delighted and appalled audience members. *Puck, Illustrirtes Humoristisches-Wochenblatt*, had arrived.[13]

It was an attractive, sprightly, well-organized publication; a far cry from either of Keppler's earlier efforts in St. Louis. At twelve pages, it was four pages shy of the standard length for a weekly of the day, but it would grow to sixteen pages with its fifth issue. In size, its pages were about the same dimensions as the picture *Life*, bigger than most of the humor magazines published at that time, but smaller than the folio monthlies from Leslie's shop. Its most striking characteristic was its cartoons. Unlike its competitors, who varied their formats, one suspected, based on the energies of their artists, *Puck* committed itself to the weekly presentation of two full-page front and back cover cartoons, as well as a double-spread on its center two pages. The remaining pages of the magazine were given over to comic fiction, poetry, editorials, and a page or two of advertisements. It was, in short, a good value for a dime, and the German-American community responded.[14] Circulation climbed to ten thousand early in its run, and then doubled to twenty thousand within a few years, where it remained for nearly two decades.[15]

The success of the German *Puck* can be attributed to several factors. The German-American community of New York City, which numbered more than 150,000, was the most literate and well-educated segment of the city's immigrant population. By the 1870s, German-Americans held positions of influence and prestige throughout the city. German social clubs for the well-heeled, such as the Leiderkranz and the Arion Societies, flourished. German-Americans could afford the weekly indulgence that a humor magazine represented and, now that one had come along displaying a spirit and polish to match the humor magazines of Europe, they welcomed it.

That spirit and polish was due entirely to the talents of its staff. Schwarzmann's conscientious and industrious nature served the small publishing company well. One employee remembered, "There were few offices [in New York] where the system [of operation] was so thorough and so good. For this Adolph Schwarzmann, the publisher, was responsible." Week after week, the editor, Schenck, called upon his own talents and those of his literary

Joseph Keppler, Jr., suggests the appropriate treatment for yellow press vermin on the cover of *Puck, Illustrirtes Humoristisches Wochenblatt*, 17 August 1898.

Das richtige Verfahren mit dem „gelben" Preßungeziefer.
Der Held von Santiago versteht das „'Rausschmeißen" aus dem JJ.

friends to fill ten closely printed pages with witty poetry and prose. Finally, there were Keppler's cartoons. It is accurate to say that New York had never seen anything quite like them.[16]

Not only were Keppler's cartoons lithographed, which gave them a softer, more textured quality than the ubiquitous woodcut of the day, but within a few issues they were also adorned with tints, which made them even more eye-catching. In the magazine's early days, the tinting process was primitive. A color was added by sending the cartoon through the press twice, once to print the black stone and once to apply an orange or green tint to the entire page. Sometimes,the color inkwell was sectioned off, creating bands of tints instead of just one hue. In an effort of achieve more natural coloration, Keppler experimented with multiblock lithography. The stone he drew with the black lithocrayon became the source of the other blocks. This was done by transferring the black image onto a block of wood and then cutting away the element of the image that were not to appear in color. For some cartoons, he employed two or three color blocks. This elaborate process was only moderately successful. In some of the cartoons, the woodgrain of the color block was intrusively obvious. In others, poor registration marred the effect. But generally speaking the experiments in color were successful and, once *Puck* could afford the proper materials, beautiful.[17]

What could *Puck's* readers expect of its contents? Keppler, Schwarzmann, and company quickly showed that the focus of their magazine would be eclectic. It dutifully chronicled the 1876 presidential campaign in cartoon and prose, lending nominal support to Samuel Tilden, governor of New York and Democratic presidential candidate. But when Republican candidate Rutherford B. Hayes won (some contend, stole) the election, *Puck* seemed not to care. It was more opinionated when it came to New York City and the Tammany machine that controlled it. But those attacks, full of ridicule, were like spit in the wind for all the effect they had. Just as much space was given over to events in Europe, as befitted a magazine for European-born readers.[18]

While politics dominated *Puck's* content, the magazine was not a slave to political events. Many *Puck* cartoons and much of its prose focused on German-American life in New York: the theater, the social club activities, controversies in the German-language press, and the like. Though Keppler no longer performed on stage, he retained an abiding interest in those who did. He seemed to take every opportunity that presented itself to caricature the actors and the managers of the German-American stage. All three men were members of the Leiderkranz and Arion societies. So, not surprisingly, *Puck* devoted considerable space to chronicling the societies' varied and colorful activities. And then there were the cartoons, poems, and stories that took as their subject matter nothing more important than the change of seasons, the vicissitudes of love, or the latest travesties of female fashion.[19]

Within several months of *Puck's* successful launch, Schwarzmann could not resist the same siren's call that lured Willich to the rocks: namely, publishing an English-language version of their bouncing German baby. While Keppler's cartoons would be the centerpiece of the English-language *Puck*, Keppler, Schwarzmann, and Schenck agreed that the new magazine had to be edited by an American and had to strive for "a distinct American flavor." They called in their old acquaintance Sydney Rosenfeld to take the helm. The English-language version of *Puck* was first published on 14 March 1877. At first Keppler drew a different cover cartoon for the English edition, to better distinguish it on the newsstand from its older German brother. But this practice proved too onerous and was soon abandoned. Within weeks, Keppler's cartoons appeared in both editions unaltered; only the letterpress of the two magazines varied from one another.[20]

The English-language edition of *Puck* was not an immediate success. In fact, it was a financial disaster for the little publishing firm—but that is another story, told in detail elsewhere. Suffice it to say, the German *Puck* sustained the English *Puck* for its first two years of existence and, as a consequence, provided the dominant characteristics of both magazines. By the summer of 1879, however, it was clear that the English-language *Puck* was off the critical list and beginning to thrive. Within a year of that time, the English-language *Puck* attained the circulation of 100,000, five times the size of the German *Puck's* circulation. This changed the German *Puck* forever. It was no longer a German-language humor magazine with an English-language edition; it was America's leading humor magazine, which also published an edition in German. Now Keppler's cartoons were drawn to appeal to an American audience. This meant good-bye to all the cartoons about the German-American stage; good-bye to all of the cartoons about the activities of the German-American fraternal organizations; good-bye, too, to all but the most significant cartoons that dwelt on events in Central and Eastern Europe. After 1879, *Puck, Illustrirtes Humoristisches Wochenblatt,* lost its distinctive

character as a German-American weekly and, instead, became a shadow of its powerful, influential, and wealthy English-speaking brother.[21]

Puck's founding triumvirate, German-Americans all, remained in place for ten years. Then, the magazine's chronicle begins reading like a litany of death. In April 1886, Schenck died. He was succeeded by associate editor Wilhelm Muller, but Muller was forced to step down fourteen months later because of poor health. Next, Emil Knotser took over the editor's chair. He was a lawyer by training and an editor by profession. He lasted less time than Muller, dying in the editor's chair nine months after assuming it. Keppler then called his old partner Heinrich Binder, who was the editor of the *Detroiter Abend-Post*, to New York. Binder assumed the editorship in May 1888 and remained in the position until his death in July 1895. Keppler had died the year before, in February. Schwarzmann alone remained; from the mid-nineties until his death in 1904 he controlled every aspect of Puck's publishing empire. When Binder died, Schwarzmann brought back Wilhelm Muller, now in better health, as editor.[22]

Unfortunately, by this time, the magazine itself was failing. The German *Puck* had over the years become the smallest part of the New York firm, known as Keppler and Schwarzmann, Inc., which published weekly, monthly, and quarterly magazines, as well as books. Schwarzmann, ever the hard-headed businessman, came to the conclusion that the German *Puck* had outlived its usefulness. Without ceremony, the 22 August 1898 issue of *Puck, Illustrirtes Humoristisches Wochenblatt*, was its last. It was the only really important humor magazine published for German-Americans. And it topped that distinction by siring the first important humor magazine published for all Americans. ●

This article was made possible through research using the complete set of German Puck in the Ohio State University Cartoon Research Library. This set, the only known complete set in existence, was donated by Albert L. Simpson, Esq., of Union, New Jersey.

NOTES

1. G. A. Zimmermann, *Deutsch in Amerika* (Chicago: Eyller, 1894), 96; Adolph Zucker, *The Forty-Eighters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 279; Karl Arndt, *German Language Press of the America*, vol. 1 (Munich: Verlag Dokumentation, 1976), 248, 250, 265, 274-75.

2. *Die Vehme* was published from 28 August 1869 to 20 August 1870. Arndt, *German Language Press of the Americas*, vol. 1, 272. Alexander Schem, *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Conversations-Lexicon*, vol. 7 (New York: E. Steiger, 1869-74), 48.

3. "The Cover," *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society* 2 (July 1946), 43. Eugene Zimmerman, *Autobiography* (typescript in the possession of Horseheads, NY, Historical Society) as published in *Cartoonist Profiles* (December 1981), 68. "Minna Keppler" certified copy of death, Bureau of Vital Statistics, City of St. Louis, 17 December 1870.

4. *St. Louis Puck*, 26 August 1871. "Keppler's Life in St. Louis," *New Yorker Staats Zeitung*, 21 February 1894; *St. Louis Puck*, 2 December 1871, 2; 16 December 1871, 2; Zimmermann, *Deutsch In Amerika*, supplement, 55; W. A. Kelsoe, *St. Louis Reference Record* (St. Louis: privately published, n.d.), 270.

5. The English *Puck* was first announced on page 2 of the 9 December 1871 issue. Keppler rejoined the weekly with the 13 January 1872 issue. Willich reannounced the coming of the English *Puck* on page 2 of the 9 March 1872 issue.

6. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 6 July 1872, 268.

7. Mott, *History of American Magazines*, vol. 2, 452-465; Arndt, *German Language Press of the Americas*, vol. 1, 360.

8. Information on Schwarzmann is scarce. See "Editor of Puck Dead," *New York Times*, 5 February 1904, and "Adolph Schwarzmann Dead," *New York Herald*, 5 February 1904; Zimmermann, *Autobiography, Cartoonist Profiles* (December 1981), 65, (June 1982), 74-75.

9. Richard Samuel West, *Satire on Stone: The Political Cartoons of Joseph Keppler* (Champaign, IL: The University of Illinois Press, 1988), 66-68.

10. Arndt, *German Language Press of the Americas*, vol. 1, 383.

11. Draper Hill, "'What Fools These Mortals Be!'" (AB Thesis, Harvard College, 1957), 28; Arndt, *German Language Press of the Americas*, vol. 1, 383; Keppler and Schwarzmann discontinued the *New Yorker Muzik Zeitung* in April 1879.

12. Arndt, *German Language Press of the Americas*, vol. 1, 363, 394. By 1876, *Wild Oats'* best days were behind it. That might also be said of the fortunes of J. B. Collins and Co. The circulations of all its publications were slipping. Probably in response to the German *Puck's* success, Collins discontinued *Schnedderedengg* with its 22 September 1877 issue, four months shy of its fifth birthday.

13. Contract is part of the Keppler collection, New York Historical Society, Manuscript Room.

14. G. A. Zimmermann, *Deutsch in Amerika*, 172; *Puck, Illustrirtes Humoristisches-Wochenblatt!*, [23] September 1876.

15. Arndt, *German Language Press of the Americas*, vol. 1, 389.

16. Henry Gallup Paine, "H. C. Bunner and His Circle," *The Bookman* 35 (June 1912), 462.

17. West, *Satire on Stone*, 73.

18. West, *Satire on Stone*, 115-118.

19. West, *Satire on Stone*, 118-122.

20. Gerald Jensen, *Life and Letters of H. C. Bunner* (Durham, NC: DukeUniversity Press, 1939), 30-34; "Sydney Rosenfeld," *New York Times*, 15 June 1931.

21. West, *Satire on Stone*, 76-79.

22. Editorial tenures were determined by scanning the complete set of German *Puck* in the Ohio State University Cartoon Research Library. The German *Puck's* associate editors included: Karl Asmus (1876-1878); Wilhelm Muller (1878-1886); Caspar Honthumb, a Cincinnati journalist (1879-1881); Carl Hauser (1882-1892) who left *Puck* to found his own German-language humor magazine, *Hallo!* (1892-1894), and then edit *Frank Leslie's Illustrierte Zeitung* in its final year (1894) and *Puck's* rival *Der Freischutz* (1894-1908).

Frank Stack

An Appreciation

BY HARVEY PEKAR

Jay Kennedy, author of *The Underground Comic Book Price Guide*, considers Frank Stack's *Adventures of Jesus*, published in 1962 by Gilbert Shelton, to be the first underground comic book. You would think Frank would get some attention for this, but virtually no one knows about it. That has been pretty much the story of his life up to now. His impressive achievements have attracted almost no attention.

In addition to illustrating his own stories, Frank has illustrated some of mine since 1986. There is no doubt that he is among the great cartoon artists of this century—and that is not just my opinion. After reading *Our Cancer Year*, the book my wife, Joyce Brabner, and I wrote that Frank illustrated, Robert Crumb told me, "No one, not even me, could've done a better job of drawing it than Frank." If you are acquainted with Crumb, you know he is both stingy with his compliments and not into false modesty. His assessment of Stack's work is high praise indeed.

Stack is one of the best educated and most technically skilled and versatile artists to work in the comics medium. For years he has been professor of art at the University of Missouri at Columbia; in fact, from 1982-1985 he headed the department. His knowledge of fine art was acquired in part at the University of Texas (BA) and at the University of Wyoming. He has picked up a great deal on his own as well, particularly regarding the history and technique of drawing comics. In the late 1950s when he was going to school, there were no courses in these subjects. As an undergraduate Frank contributed to and eventually edited the University of Texas humor magazine, *The Texas Ranger*, one of the tributaries that fed what was to become the underground comics stream. In addition to Stack, Gilbert Shelton and Jack Jackson ("Jaxon") contributed to the *Ranger*, Shelton becoming editor a couple of years after Stack.

In the 1960s Frank (using the pseudonym Foolbert Sturgeon) began producing his brilliant *New Adventures of Jesus* series, in which Jesus returns to the contemporary USA and learns what it is like to be an academic, to encounter the Armed Services, and to view a Cecil B. DeMille-type

The second page of "Jesus Joins the Academic Community" from Frank Stack's 1979 work, *The New Adventures of Jesus*. Used by permission of the artist.

SOME TIME LATER

I'M SO SORRY, MR. CHRIST, BUT DEAN SCOTUS WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE YOU THIS WEEK. BUT ASSISTANT DEAN "SMILEY" FIBEUS IS READY TO TALK TO YOU NOW.

WE'RE PLEASED TO HAVE YOU JOIN THE STAFF, CHRIST. I'M SURE YOU'LL LIKE IT HERE. WE HAVE A WARM FRIENDLY SPIRIT HERE AT SUMP. WE RESPECT EACH OTHER HERE. WE HAVE A WELL-BALANCED STAFF... NOW. EVERYONE FITS INTO HIS SLOT AND WE HOPE TO KEEP IT THAT WAY.

NOW, WE CONCEIVE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN ETHICS AS A WONDERFUL ALLY OF OUR MESSIANIC TECHNOLOGY. AS AN ENLIGHTENED HUMANITARIAN, YOU NATURALLY SUBSCRIBE TO THIS VIEW...

...AND YOU WILL, NO DOUBT BEND YOUR BEST EFFORTS TO RESTRUCTURING YOUR ETCHICAL CODE IN ADJUSTMENT TO SPACE AGE REALITIES. SINCE YOUR FORMAL EDUCATION TOOK PLACE IN, SHALL WE SAY, A SOMEWHAT UN-PROGRESSIVE MILIEU, THIS NECESSARY ADJUSTMENT MAY REQUIRE A MAJOR EFFORT ON YOUR PART. WITH THAT IN MIND, AS WELL AS YOUR UNCONVENTIONAL CREDENTIALS, WE ARE NATURALLY MAKING YOUR APPOINTMENT ON A WEEK TO WEEK BASIS.

AS FOR YOUR DUTIES... YOUR LECTURES ARE ENTIRELY YOUR OWN, THOUGH WE DO RECOMMEND SEEKING ADVICE FROM YOUR DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN. THERE WILL BE MINIMAL DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE WORK, SOME STUDENT ADVISING AND JANITORIAL OBLIGATIONS.

THESE ARE SO MINOR THAT THEY WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH YOUR RESEARCH AND PUBLISHING, WHICH WE TRUST WILL PROCEED AT AN INCREASED RATE.

AH! MAY I ASK, JAY, WHAT IS YOUR BASIC THEORY OF HIGHER EDUCATION?

OH... HMM. I GUESS IT IS "YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE"

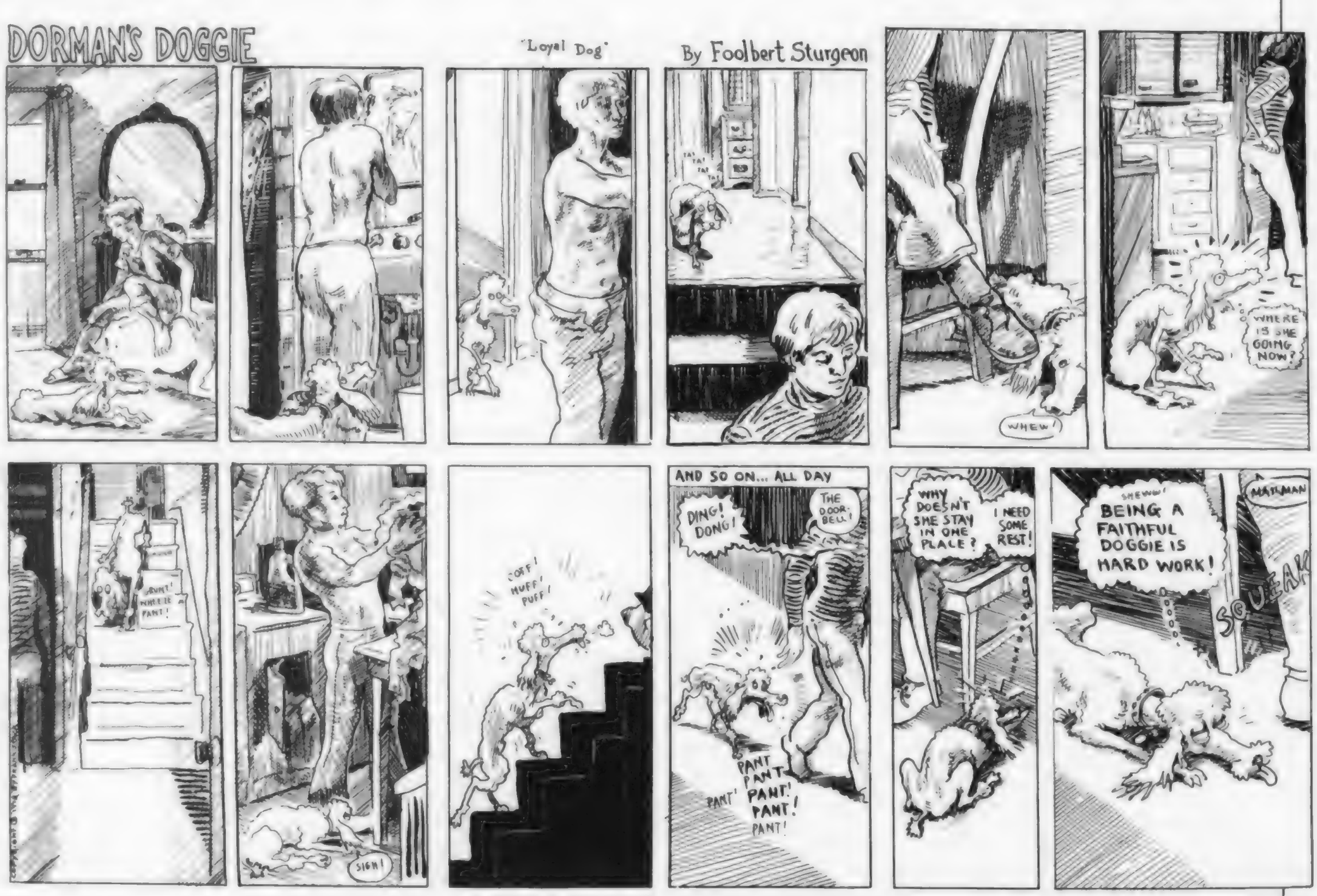
biblical movie spectacular in which Jesus is the protagonist. He also created his *Feelgood Funnies*, in which the title character, Dr. Feelgood, is a three hundred pound black street psychologist, a "natural" man who sits in his apartment drinking beer and watching TV. His client, a neurotic white intellectual named Dorman Grammit, a character loosely based on Stack himself, comes to him with his problems, which Feelgood invariably trivializes, thus humiliating Dorman. Frank is making fun of intellectuals here, as he also does in his *Jesus* stories, especially *Jesus Joins the Academic Community*. Dorman and his pets are featured in another comic, *Dorman's Doggie*, where the owner and his cat are seen from the dog's perspective.

These were all highly original features, but Frank's drawing and writing were too subtle for even the typical Crumb fan to appreciate. His stuff did not hit you in the face like S. Clay Wilson's sex- and violence-filled work. It was not about likable dopers, such as the Freak Brothers. You had to know something about politics, history, and illustration technique to realize how good Frank was. As a result, Stack did not get the credit he deserved during the 1960s and early 1970s, when the counterculture was most widespread and underground comics were at the height of their popularity. After the Vietnam American war and the draft ended, the counterculture evaporated, and with it, support for alternative comics. When that happened, Stack was virtually forgotten.

Frank and I began corresponding in 1986. At that time he was active as a painter and print maker, and had almost quit doing comics work. I was thrilled when he agreed to provide artwork for my autobiographical comic book series *American Splendor*, and my enthusiasm was justified. He is one of those rare birds who can figure out a superb way to illustrate any story, from humorous to extremely grim.

At the time Frank got going with me, he started to do other work. Interest in alternative comics had

"Loyal Dog" from *Dorman's Doggie* (1990). Used by permission of the artist.



Title page of "The Lying Ear" from *Blab!* 6 (1991). Used by permission of the artist.

The Lying Ear
VINCENT VAN GOGH AND PAUL GAUGUIN IN ARLES
by Frank Stack
COPYRIGHT 1991 BY FRANK STACK
"THE CITY OF LIGHT", MY ASS!
JANUARY, 1888
VINCENT VAN GOGH IS IN THE PROCESS OF DECIDING TO LEAVE PARIS
I CAN'T WORK IN THIS STUFF. ;GAG! COFF!;
I HATE SNOW AND ICE! THE SUN HASN'T SHONE HERE SINCE SEPTEMBER. MY COLD'S GETTING WORSE. I'D QUIT SMOKING BUT IT'S CHEAPER THAN EATING REGULAR MEALS ;HACK HACK;
THIS PLACE IS KILLING ME! PAINTING IS ALL I'M GOOD FOR AND I CAN'T DO IT HERE. I'LL GO SOUTH WHERE IT'S WARM AND SUNNY
IF I CAN PAINT EVERYDAY, MAYBE I CAN GET SOME THINGS THAT MY BROTHER THEO CAN SELL.
AND KEEP MYSELF BUSY AND STRAIGHTEN OUT MY LIFE!
GOD KNOWS I NEED TO!

grown since the early 1980s, consequently there was a chance Frank might find a larger audience. In the past eight years or so, he has produced several major works including a *Dorman's Doggie* collection and several works dealing with historical topics. His version of the Trojan War was originally issued as a four-part *Amazons* serial for Rip Off comics. *The Bard Must Die*, a story about England during the reigns of Queen Elizabeth I and King James, has appeared in *Blab!* Another notable work Frank contributed to *Blab!* was a long, fictionalized biographical piece on Van Gogh and his relationship with Gauguin.

Frank Stack is a consummate artist. He is insightful and knowledgeable, with a lively interest in history, contemporary politics, and social issues. His powers of observation and visual memory contribute enormously to the aesthetic success of his work. He knows how people from various social and economic classes dress and move. If he is asked to depict something unfamiliar, he does research. When illustrating *Our Cancer Year*, he flew to Cleveland in the dead of winter to take photos of buildings, neighborhoods, and the oncology clinic where I was treated.

The excellence of Frank's draftsmanship may not be apparent to many comic book readers who are accustomed to superhero illustrations. Although his figures are not photorealistic, the physical appearance of his characters is not exaggerated in the typical "comic book" fashion. Frank's prints demonstrate that he can execute clean and accurately detailed drawings. But often he does not feature highly detailed line drawings in his comic art. Influenced by impressionism, he frequently substitutes texture for line. Stack uses large black areas, cross hatching, parallel lines, and gradation of values to create texturally rich pages. Especially good examples of this can be found in the *Dorman's Doggie* collection, particularly the chapter in which the dog ventures out of his own neighborhood. Here Stack's use of contrasting light and shadow makes an ordinary American suburban

BLOOD AND BAWDRY'S WHAT THEY LIKE! SUCH STUFF IS TAYLORED TO THEIR TASTE. IT'S POETRY THAT THEY HATE!
THE KING HIMSELF HAS HIGH REGARD FOR YOU. PRIVATELY HE SAYS YOUR TALENT IS DIVINE, BUT THAT YOU PROFANE YOUR GIFT...
HOW DOES HE THINK THAT I PROFANE IT?
BY ONLY WRITING PLAYS.
AS I MOST FEARED! THE KING FROWNS ON OUR THEATER! WE MAY AS WELL ALL PACK UP.
IT'S NOT SO BAD FOR ME. I'VE HAD A TWENTY YEAR CAREER AND MADE SOME FORTUNE. I'LL GO BACK TO STRATFORD AND BE A FARMING GENTLEMAN AT HOME...
HIS MAJESTY DOESN'T WANT YOU GONE! HE WANTS YOU HERE, WORKING FOR HIM
WORK FOR HIM HOW?
HE WANTS YOU AS THE VOICE OF GOD!

Pages 5 and 6 of "The Bard Must Die!" from *Blab!* 7 (1992). Used by permission of the artist.

The First Underground Comic Book

While studying for his M.A. in Fine Art at the University of Wyoming in the fall of 1962, Frank Stack sent some cartoons back to Gilbert Shelton in Austin, Texas. Like Stack, Shelton had attended the University of Texas and had edited *The Texas Ranger*, the campus humor magazine. After his stint as editor, Shelton began launching a series of underground projects, and in the summer of 1962, he started a renegade broadsheet, *The Austin Iconoclastic Newsletter* (called "The" for short). In this, he published Stack's occasional submissions, including some single-page comic strips about Jesus Christ in which the Savior is viewed somewhat (no—entirely) irreverently, from the twentieth century perpective of a person who has read the New Testament with an appreciation for the human predicament rather than an appetite for the divine message. For example, when Jesus stops a group of men who are stoning a woman and admonishes them, saying, "He who is without sin should cast the first stone," one of the stoning party, grasping the situation instantly, hands a stone to Jesus and says: "Gosh! Sorry we started without you, Jesus. We didn't know you went in for stuff like this. Here—bop her a good one."

Shelton, vastly amused by these productions, decided to disseminate a collection of them. He took eight of Stack's single-page strips to a friend who had access to a photocopying machine and together they ran off about fifty copies of each page. Shelton supplied the cover, a thumbnail-size drawing of the head of Jesus, with the title, *The New Adventures of J*, and the byline, "By F.S.," and stapled all the pieces together, thus creating the first booklet of comix.

By 1968, Shelton had left Austin for San Francisco's Haight Ashbury District, hoping to cash in on the rock concert poster business that was thriving there. He and a trio of other Texans (Jack Jackson, Dave Moriarty, and Fred Todd) pooled their resources, bought an old Davidson printing press, moved it into Don Donahue's loft upstairs at Mowrey's Opera House where Donahue had shortly before (February 1968) published the first issues of Robert Crumb's first comic book, *Zap Comix*, and began producing posters. In January 1969, they started calling themselves Rip Off Press, and their first publication under that name was a collection of Stack's cartoons and strips about Jesus. Called *The New Adventures of Jesus*, this was in regular magazine format, and it identified "F.S." as "Foolbert Sturgeon." The name, Stack told me, although inspired by the initials, was intended to sound like Gilbert Shelton, "deliberately to confuse."

On July 4, 1992, Stack was inducted into the UndergroundCartoonists Hall of Fame, which is maintained in the Bucktown Pub in Chicago, Illinois. There were fireworks.

Excerpted from The Art of the Comic Book *by Robert C. Harvey, University Press of Mississippi (1996).*

neighborhood with conventional vegetation look like a tropical rain forest.

When drawing objects and people, Frank generally attempts to get the most from the fewest lines. When the situation calls for it, however, he can call on his considerable technical skill to make increasingly complex drawings. The appropriateness of his choices between abstract or realistic, economical or detailed drawings, has been widely praised. Jim Woodring said, "The grisly scenes of Pekar's cancer cure are handled with such impressionistic precision by Stack (in *Our Cancer Year*) that reading them becomes a harrowing experience."[1]

Frank's decisions as an illustrator are based on helping the narrative achieve the desired effect. Showing off his virtuosity means nothing to him. In drawing as well as in writing, he is a topnotch storyteller, unlike some artists whose work may be a pleasure to view, but it obscures the intent of the narrative. Because he is such a great team player, his comics work has gone largely unrecognized. Word has to get out. Read Frank Stack's work—then tell a friend about him. ●

NOTE
1. Jim Woodring. *Jim* 2:5 (May 1995) [19].

resources

The Museum of Comic Art in Angoulême, France

by Thierry Groensteen

Angoulême, located in southwestern France, has been the site of an annual comics festival since 1974. This show, now the largest specialized event in Europe, caused the town to be known as the country's capital of comic art, a perception that was reinforced in 1983 by the creation of a comic art workshop at the Ecole Régionale des Beaux-Arts. It is the only fine arts college in France to offer a diploma recognized by the state. Thus when President François Mitterrand and Minister of Culture Jack Lang decided to create the Centre National de la Bande Dessinée et de l'Image (CNBDI) in 1983, Angoulême was a natural choice. CNBDI is housed in a modern facility of 7,000 square meters designed by architect Roland Castro. Located on the banks of the Charente River, the building was first an abbey and later a brewery.

CNBDI is a privately governed association, subsidized by the French national government and, to a lesser extent, by the regional authorities and the town of Angoulême. Its mission is to collect, study, and promote the comic and graphic art heritage of France. The Museum of Comic Art is an integral part of the CNBDI and includes several areas and facilities: a collection of original drawings that are shown in rotating exhibitions; a library of published materials; an educational department; the publishing department; and a bookshop and cafeteria. In addition to the museum, CNBDI contains a Department of Digital Images, a section specializing in exhibition preparation, and an audio-visual production unit. The center employs thirty-five people, of which fifteen are directly involved with the museum's activities.

The museum's collection of original works, comprised of six hundred drawings in 1989, (a year before its opening), is now at 4,000 pieces, and grows approximately ten percent annually. Primary importance is given to French language artists (French, Belgian, and Swiss), but international work, especially American comic art, has not been forgotten. Among the French artists represented, extensive resources of a hundred items or more are held for Benjamin Rabier (1864-1939, creator of *Gédéon the Duck*); Joseph Pinchon (1871-1953, creator of *Bécassine*); René Giffey (1884-1965, author of *Buffalo Bill* and many other adventure series); Alain Saint-Ogan (1895-1974, creator of *Zig and Puce*); René Bastard (1900-1975, creator of *Yves le Loup*, the French equivalent of *Prince Valiant*); and Robert Velter (1909-1991, creator of *Spirou*). At least ten original works by A. Blondeau, René Brantonne, Edmond Calvo, Christophe, Bob Dansler, Jean-Claude Forest, Auguste Liquois, Mat, Henri Monnier, Pellos, Jean Trubert, and Ymer are available. The museum owns six originals by Caran d'Ache, three by Hergé; and work by contemporary comic art stars such as Franquin, Tillieux, Greg, Uderzo, Hermann, Druillet, Bretécher, Tardi, Bilal, Moebius, Loustal, Juillard, and others. The museum has had to purchase about two-thirds of the pieces in its permanent collection because French artists are extremely reluctant to donate original works. They prefer either to keep them or to sell them at the public auctions held every two months in Paris at the Hôtel Drouot.

In the area of international art, the museum owns important works by artists such as Frank Bellamy, Luciano Bottaro, Alberto Breccia, Benito Jacovitti, Hans Kresse, Wei-Xiao Ming, and Ye Xin. American comic art alone is represented by nearly three hundred works, including art by Milton Caniff, Robert Crumb, Will Eisner, Bud Fisher, Harold Foster, George Herriman, Burne Hogarth, Walt Kelly, Jack Kirby, Harvey Kurtzman, Winsor McCay, George McManus, Alex Raymond, Charles Schulz, Otto Soglow, Cliff Sterrett, James Swinnerton, and others.

The permanent exhibition displays a selection of 250 works that changes three times each year. The displays are arranged chronologically, so that the visitors' circuit takes them

through the history of comic art (known in France as "the ninth art"), from Rodolphe Töpffer to the present day. Forty interactive audio-visual devices give supplemental information throughout the exhibition. The interior of the museum is fitted with specially designed furniture. Comics-related objects, shown in glass cases, and three-dimensional models of selected comic characters bring the display to life.

The museum mounts half-a-dozen temporary exhibitions a year, either from its own holdings or by borrowing items from artists or collectors. Some are retrospectives of work by individual artists, such as Alain Saint-Ogan, François Schuiten, Morris, Alberto Breccia, Winsor McCay, and Robert Crumb. Others are based on themes like "Devils and Angels," "Bandes Dessinées et Storyboard," and "The Universe of the Mangas." These exhibitions are designed to travel throughout Europe and beyond.

The museum library houses the first specialized comics collection of printed material in France. In the reading room, visitors can read 10,000 French-language comics (all recent publications); foreign language collections; and a selection of specialized magazines from all over the world. They can also watch videos on well-known cartoonists and the history of comic art. The

Through the audiovisual facilities and a choice of about 250 pages of comics or illustrations, the museum conjures up a complete history of the Ninth Art. The chronological route through the facility includes both French and American comics.

PLAN OF MUSEUM

Through the audiovisual facilities and a choice of about 250 pages of comics or illustrations, the museum conjures up a complete history of the 9th Art. Chronologically, the route through the museum allows you to discover:

A: French comics

1. The birth of comics
2. Stories by images (before the creation of comics)
3. Alain Saint-Ogan: The triumph of the balloon
4. Homour from the 1920's-1950's
5. The world of Hergé
6. Realistic stories since 1945
7. Le Journal de Vaillant*
8. Le Journal Tintin*
9. Les grandes heures de Spirou*
10. Comics for the young since 1970
11. Pilote: the path towards an adult comic
12. Humour "Silly and Unkind"
13. The new press
14. Trends of the contemporary comics

*(important comics from the after-war period)

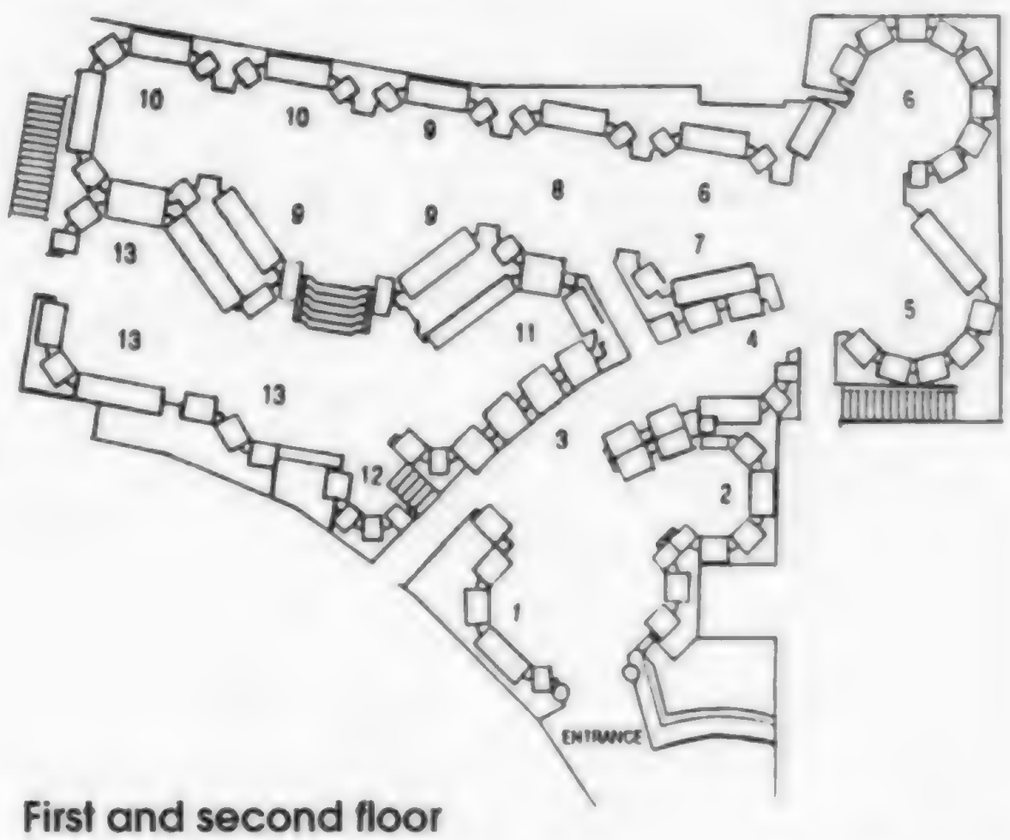
B: American comics

15. Escapism and satire made in USA
16. The splendor of funnies
17. Adventure comics
18. Comic books and superheroes

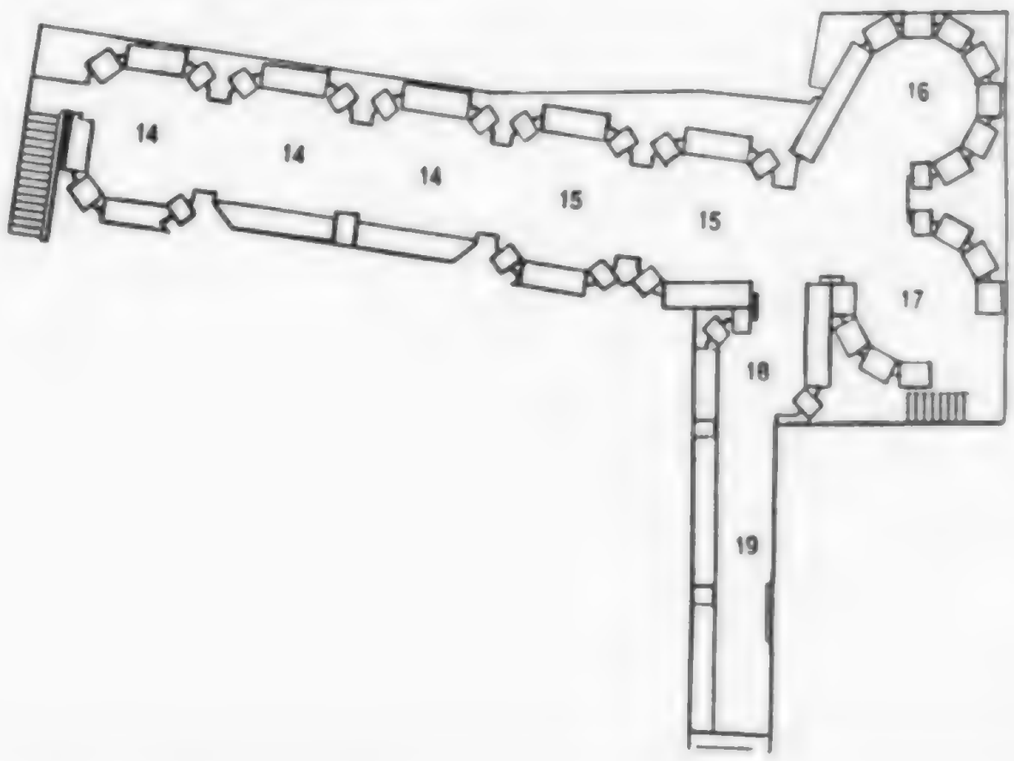
C: Gallery space

19. Mini-exhibition on a theme or an author

First and second floor



First and second floor



- Atroce!

Effrayant !

Terrifiés par cet horrible spectacle, ils se cachent le visage pour ne plus rien voir....

La petite locomotive se soulève, puis retombe lourdement sur le talus, entraînant avec elle tous les wagons et profitant de son élan.....

...Elle gagne la grand'route...

...et dévale la côte qui descend jusqu'à Pétard-City....

C'est rien qu'ça mon p'tit vieux! on va la réparer... et pi... demain eh ben, ça partira au demi-quart de tour!

Peuh!

Vous avez eu chaud hein!

Heureusement que j'étais là pour bloquer les freins!

BANK AND C.

...et s'arrête pile devant la Proots Bank and C°, où le directeur fait aussitôt enfermer dans ses coffres, les fameux lingots d'or, qui cette fois encore, échappent à Chewing-gum-Bill.

(à suivre)

-CALVO-

ZIG et PUCE
VONT CHEZ LES PEAUX-ROUGES
ÇA NE MARCHE PAS MAL!... DOLLY EST BIEN CACHÉE... SON ONCLE EST MALADE DE CHAGRIN... QUAND IL SERA MORT, J'HÉRITERAI DE SES MILLIARDS!...
MONSIEUR CHARLEY MUSGRAVE, NOUS AVONS EU UN ACCIDENT D'AUTO ET ZIG ET PUCE QUI SONT PARTIS À LA RECHERCHE DE DOLLY, SE SONT EMPARÉS D'UN ORDRE ECRIT DE VOTRE MAIN ET SIGNÉ DE VOS INITIALES
VOUS ÊTES DES IMBÉCILES!... CE PAPIER ME CONDAMNE... COMMENT RÉPARER VOS GAFFES?...
CEPENDANT, LE CHAUFFEUR DU TAXI DE ZIG ET PUCE REFUSAIT D'ALLER PLUS LOIN...
JE SUIS PÈRE DE FAMILLE ET JE NE PEUX PAS ME LANCER DANS DES AVENTURES
EH BIEN, ALLEZ VOUS EN!
CE PAPIER SIGNÉ: C.M. EST UNE INDICATION... C.M... C.M... MAIS CE SONT LES INITIALES DE CHARLEY MUSGRAVE
LE BANDIT! C'EST LUI QUI A FAIT ENLEVER DOLLY...
IL FAUT RETOURNER À NEW-YORK POUR LE DÉMASQUER!...
JE COMPRENDS TOUT MAINTENANT... DOLLY SUPPRIMÉE, C'EST MUSGRAVE QUI HÉRITE DE LA FORTUNE DE L'ONCLE...
ET CE TAXI QUI EST REPARTI!... C'EST ENCORE LOIN NEW-YORK!
NOUS TROUVERONS PEUT-ÊTRE UNE AUTO À LOUER DANS CE VILLAGE!
JE NE LA LOUE PAS, MAIS JE PEUX LA VENDRE... ET VOUS SAVEZ, C'EST DE LA FABRICATION D'AVANT GUERRE... C'EST DU SOLIDE!...
ARRETEZ, MESSIEURS, VOUS ÊTES BIEN ZIG ET PUCE?... C'EST LE CIEL QUI ME MET SUR VOTRE ROUTE... MUSGRAVE EST ARRÊTÉ MAIS MISS DOLLY EST ENTRE LES MAINS DES PEAUX ROUGES... PARTEZ VITE POUR LE TEXAS...
MERCI, MADAME, NOUS Y PARTONS SANS PERDRE UNE MINUTE...
LE TOUR N'EST PAS MAUVAIS... LES VOILÀ PARTIS CHEZ LES PEAUX ROUGES! ILS N'ONT PAS RECONNU LEUR AMI MUSGRAVE SOUS CES VÊTEMENTS DE VIEILLE FEMME!
ALAIN SAINT-OGAN

Above: An early *Zig et Puce* page by Alain Saint-Ogan.

Left: A 1954 page from *Moustache et Trottinette*, a cat-and-mouse story, by Edmond Calvo.

library regularly updates its collections of periodicals and books.

A special area of the library that houses theses, reference books, journals, and videos is available to researchers. They are also able to consult thematic files created by the museum's staff. On request these experts will undertake specific inquiries for researchers. These services are billed at an hourly rate.

The archives section of the library is not open to the general public in order to comply with international specifications for the conservation of paper. About 80,000 comics (1,500 different titles), and thousands of *albums* (graphic novels) are housed in this area. They provide a unique panorama of the evolution of the French children's press from 1840 to the present, including such classics as *Magasin Illustré d'Education et de Récréation* (1864); *La Semaine de Suzette* (1905); *L'Epatant* (1908); *Le Journal de Mickey* (1934); *Spirou* (1938); and *Pilote* (1959).This collection is regularly augmented with recently published books under the terms of a trust convention signed by the CNBDI, Angoulême's town library, and the National Library of France.

A comic art database that will be accessible on the Internet is being developed as part of the effort to provide computerized access to the library's collections.

The museum is in the process of greatly expanding its publishing activities. Since opening it has published the *Répertoire Professionnel de la Bande Dessinée Francophone* every two years. This is an exhaustive list of everyone concerned with the comics business: publishers, wholesalers, booksellers, festivals, galleries, and schools. In addition, some exhibitions have had companion publications, most of which were co-published with private publishers. The museum is now preparing a theoretical magazine on the history and aesthetics of comic art (scheduled for January 1996); a catalogue of its collection (scheduled for publication in October 1996); and a reprint series of hard-to-find masterpieces from the great French heritage of bandes dessinées.

Persons seeking additional information on the Museum of Comic Art should contact Thierry Groensteen, director, at 121 rue de Bordeaux, F16000 Angoulême, France; or at the FAX number (33) 45 38 65 66. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 10:00 am to 7:00 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 2:00 pm to 7:00 pm. ●

emanata

Mort Walker in his ***Lexicon of Comicana*** *invented the term "emanata" to describe the graphic devices used by cartoonists to describe "what is going on inside" their characters. This occasional feature of Inks is intended to provide an opportunity for commentary, anecdotes of interest, and historical sketches. Readers interested in writing such a feature are invited to contact the editor.*

Boy, Can He Draw[1]

by Mark J. Cohen

From a 1992 TV interview with Whoopi Goldberg:

WHOOPI: "You're pretty suave!"

GUEST: "I wish I were. I've always wanted to be suave . . . I'm from Minnesota . . . There are no suave people in Minnesota! It's too cold to be suave"!

This is a typically self-effacing comment by Charles M. Schulz, the seventy-three year old creator of the most widely syndicated comic strip in history, *Peanuts*. Known to his friends as "Sparky," Schulz believes that what goes into a comic strip must come from the cartoonist's own life experiences and be a product of its creator's unique character. Because of this philosophy and the success of his comic strip, he is the world's most analyzed and written-about cartoonist. Schulz has had a lifetime of experiences that could happen to Charlie Brown if he grew up. For instance:

> When Sparky sent out his high school graduation announcements, he signed each one "Sincerly yours, Charles Schulz,"

Self-caricature by Charles Schulz from the private collection of Mark J. Cohen. Reprinted by permission of Charles M. Schulz.

not realizing that he had misspelled "sincerely" on every one.

After graduating from high school, Sparky answered a classified ad for the position of "Jr. Artist" placed by the Gile Letter Service, a direct mail advertising company in Minneapolis. He was given an application and a test: "Draw a radio tower." Sparky remembered his correspondence school instructions always to draw from life, so he actually found a tower to draw. Based on his drawing, he was hired. The company was located quite a distance from his house, so he had to get up before dawn and take a long streetcar ride in order to get to work by 8:00. Mr. Gile, who it seemed was always squinting from behind a cloud of cigarette smoke, introduced him to the production manager, a big, red-haired woman, who instructed him to sweep out the office, deliver packages, and other menial chores. Several weeks later, Sparky asked the production manager when he would get to do artwork. she looked at him, rolled her eyes and said "Oh no! He did it again. There is no junior artist position. All the boss wanted was a delivery boy."

When Schulz was discharged from the Army after World War II, he began to pursue a career as a cartoonist. His work had been rejected by every major syndicate before he dreamed up the concept of *Peanuts* which he sold to United Features Syndicate in 1950. He is one of the very few cartoonists to win two of the National Cartoonists Society's (NCS) Reuben Awards, the equivalent of the Oscar for motion pictures. The Reuben, named after its designer, Rube Goldberg, is, without a doubt, one of the most ridiculous looking trophies ever created. It stands more than two feet tall and features four nude acrobats balanced one atop the other in bizarre positions. The topmost figure has a bottle of india ink balanced on his buns. Marge Devine, the secretary of the NCS for many years ruled the club with an iron fist. Each year, as the Reuben was presented, Marge would be at the side of the dais to congratulate the winner. At the 1955 awards banquet, Schulz was astounded when he was declared the winner. After he accepted the award, Marge shook his hand and took some of the joy out of the occasion by saying, "We really wanted Rube (Goldberg) to win this year." Once the ceremony and all of its hoopla was over, Sparky had to make his way to the train station to catch the red-eye to Boston for an early morning appointment the next day. Sitting alone in the train seat, holding the silly looking Reuben statuette in the middle of the night was, says Schulz, "one of the loneliest moments of my life."

After forty-five years, Schulz has reached a pinnacle of success unheard of in the cartoon business. His work appears in more newspapers worldwide than any other cartoonist's, past or present, he has inspired generations of new cartoonists, and he continues to produce high quality work. Has success spoiled Charles Schulz? Recently he commented that, "I've had a one man exhibit in Rome and at the Louvre in Paris, been presented the highest civilian award, the Order of the Commander of Arts and Letters, by both the French and Italian Ministers of Culture. "I felt like I'd really arrived until I got home from Rome and there was a letter from Dinah Shore waiting for me. It said that I wouldn't be invited to play in her golf tournament because I wasn't important enough."

At seventy-three, Charles Schulz still goes to his studio every day and draws *Peanuts*. Each letter, word and line that appears in his comic strip is personally created, lettered, and drawn by him. He has never used outside writers or assistants on the strip. "Every day I try to turn out the very best comic strip I can," he says. Nobody but Charles Schulz will ever draw *Peanuts*. When Sparky retires or is no longer alive, there will be no more new *Peanuts* strips in the newspaper. This is part of his contract with United Features Syndicate.

"What were five of the best comic strips ever done?" asks Schulz. *Skippy* by Percy Crosby, *Popeye* by E. C. Segar, *Krazy Kat*, by George Herriman, *Li'l Abner* by Al Capp and *Wash Tubbs* by Roy Crane are suggested as possible contenders. "Each one," says Sparky, "could only have been done by the artist that created it. They are a personal product of that person's life experiences and imagination, and that's what made them great." Schulz mentions a name or two, pauses, and then pays a compliment he reserves

Selection from *Around the World in 45 Years* (Kansas City, MO: Andrews and McMeel, 1994), 64. Reprinted by permission of Charles M. Schulz.

SOMETIMES I LIE AWAKE AT NIGHT, AND I ASK MYSELF, "IS THIS ALL THERE IS?"
THEN I HEAR A VOICE THAT SAYS..
"WHAT KIND OF A QUESTION IS THAT?"

only for cartoonists that he holds in high regard: "Boy, could they draw."

Schulz is a cartoonist because he has no choice in the matter. He is doing what he loves to do. He cares about the history and the art of cartooning, and he is saddened because so many of the younger cartoonists are not familiar with the work of the masters such as Milton Caniff, C. M. Payne, Chester Gould, and Hal Foster. Schulz feels that too many of the new comic strips are designed to fill a market niche. "It just doesn't work that way," he says. A comic strip, he feels, is not a marketing ploy. It is a unique blending of an artist's psyche, life experiences, artistic, and writing skills. Rather than trying to get syndicated by trying to find a market, Schulz says, "Persons should concentrate on producing the very best work that they can. Develop characters and writing skills, and find your own market."

Over the past few years, several cartoonists such as Gary Larson, cartoonist for *The Far Side*, Garry Trudeau, of *Doonesbury*, and Bill Watterson, the genius behind *Calvin and Hobbes*, took time off from drawing their strips because of the stress that comes from having to write, draw, and be entertaining 365 days a year. When the cartoonist is on sabbatical, re-runs appear in the newspapers. Their syndicate, Universal Press Syndicate, recently began offering its long-time cartoonists one month's vacation each year, during which old material will appear on the funny pages. Schulz, when hearing of this, said "Don't let them tell you that this is a business that has so much stress that you have to have time off. Cartooning is what we wanted to do all our lives." He knows what he is talking about. Several years ago he crammed three months of work into two weeks so that he could take ninety days off to have coronary bypass surgery. Once he gained his lead time, he had the surgery and was back to work in about forty-five days. "I gained a month," he says.

Occasionally an aspiring cartoonist will bring Sparky samples of his or her work for suggestions. The master's comments are exacting. Schulz recently perused the work of a would-be cartoonist and said, "Why put so much work into your central character and then do such sloppy backgrounds. Your whole strip should be excellent. Go back and look at *Bringing Up Father* by George McManus or *Wash Tubbs* by Roy Crane and pay attention to their background detail." Another aspiring cartoonist was told, "Your strips are all drawn backwards. You have the set-up at the end of the strip and the punch line at the beginning. You'll have to re-do them."

Sparky realized early in the development of his cast of characters the importance of the supporting roles, what vaudevillians used to call the "second banana." Every character either plays off of Charlie Brown or another character in the strip. Charlie Brown may not be the strongest character, but without his loveable loser qualities, his everyman personality, and his hopeful, trusting nature, the rest of the strip's chemistry would be off. It is interesting that Charlie Brown is a different person to each character in the comic strip, from, simply, "that round head kid," to Snoopy, to Lucy's foil, Sally's big brother and Linus's friend and confidant. Woodstock is another very popular character in *Peanuts*, and his role is as Snoopy's second banana—he has a supporting role to a supporting cast member.

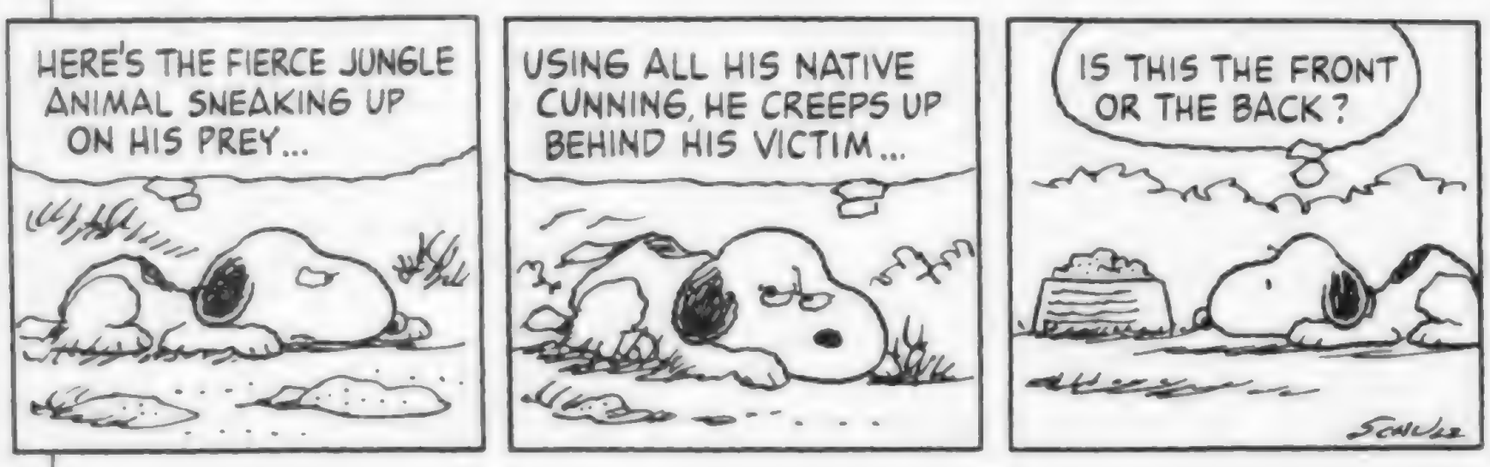
Schulz has had the restraint to keep the characters as an ensemble cast and to not let one character overshadow the others. It would have been self-defeating and limiting, for example, to let one strong character, such as Snoopy or Lucy, become the star attraction of the strip. Within the ensemble cast of *Peanuts*, many of the characters have their own recurrent gags, what used to be called "shtick."

Schultz's running gags have become a part of the world's popular culture. Can you imagine Halloween without Linus and "The Great Pumpkin?" Football season without Lucy pulling the football away from Charlie Brown? Linus without his security blanket or scriptures? Peppermint Patty not cribbing answers from Lucy? Or Schroeder without his piano and sheet music? These are running gags that we can look forward to, laugh at, and remember from years ago. They have become old friends.

By developing his characters, giving each a well defined personality, a place in the scheme of the comic strip, and by having a wonderful series of on-going gags, Sparky's creation has been able to transcend the comic pages to become a success in children's books, the musical theatre, (*You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, the most often produced play in history, and *Snoopy, The Musical*), TV specials, and the movies. Because of the success of *Peanuts*, books and articles have been written about the *Peanuts* philosophy, the *Peanuts* views on religion, and the *Peanuts* view of politics. Sparky, in response, just shrugs and says, "Heck! I just draw funny pictures."

And boy, can he draw. ●

Selection from *Around the World in 45 Years* (Kansas City, MO: Andrews and McMeel, 1994), 166. Reprinted by permission of Charles M. Schulz.


HERE'S THE FIERCE JUNGLE ANIMAL SNEAKING UP ON HIS PREY...
USING ALL HIS NATIVE CUNNING, HE CREEPS UP BEHIND HIS VICTIM...
IS THIS THE FRONT OR THE BACK?
SCHULZ

NOTE

1. The anecdotes described were told to the author by Charles Schulz on various occasions from 1986 to 1994.

book reviews

Sam Norkin: Drawings, Stories

by Sam Norkin

Reviewed by David A. Beronä

Sam Norkin's theater caricatures appeared weekly in the *New York Daily News* for twenty-six years and the *New York Herald Tribune* for fifteen years. They were also published in the *Washington Post*, the *Washington Star*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Philadelphia Bulletin* and the *Boston Globe*. *Sam Norkin: Drawings, Stories* is a selection of this work that began in the 1940s. The book includes 266 drawings that are mostly devoted to the theater and are presented along with his personal reflections and anecdotes. In his introduction, Norkin states that, "In the course of presenting my material, I have produced a kind of professional autobiography. The stories behind the drawings reveal my views, values, and background."

There are many humorous stories such as the time Zero Mostel, who starred with Eli Wallach in Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*, approached Norkin when he arrived at the rehearsal to do his sketch of the play. "Mostel greeted me and took me aside to whisper, 'Here's twenty dollars. Keep Eli out of the drawing!'"

The author also frequently makes amusing comments ("Everybody knows that Sherlock Holmes was really Basil Rathbone.") and tells a few heart-felt stories as when he asked John Gielgud how he could weep on cue in a scene from *Home*. Gielgud replied, "I think of something, but I won't reveal what it is."

After all the anecdotes about the celebrities who have come and gone with the success and failures of the shows, Norkin's caricatures remain vibrant and are better than film in capturing the ambience and essence of the characters in a play. In addition, this book makes an important contribution to theater history as it is the only record of plays that never opened or whose run was short such as *The Gay Felons*.

Although Norkin offers the reader this cascade of his theater

The Merchant of Venice. Geraldine James as Portia; Dustin Hoffman as Shylock; Basil Henson as Duke of Venice. *Stages*, 1990.

caricatures and recollections, he does not discuss the historical and professional framework of his work at length. A chronological format, for example, would have provided more insight into Norkin's stylistic development.

Norkin is more effective when he steps away from the "theater stories" and presents the events of historical significance he has witnessed. He provides a valuable account of the effect newspaper strikes had on the public shift in acceptance to television as the media for theater critics and the stunning effect television advertising had in the success of shows that began with Bob Fosse's *Pippin*. The book would have been strengthened if Norkin's scrutiny of the power that newspapers also played in the theater industry and his insight into the authority critics held over the success of any show had been better developed.

Norkin's book joins the historical ranks of the New York theater and Hollywood drawings by Al Hirschfeld with his book, *Hirschfeld: Art and Recollections from Eight Decades.* Both men's work documents the entertainment industry in the heyday of the newspaper empire prior to the advent of television. It would have been intriguing to read about Norkin's relationship with Hirschfeld and other contemporaries, considering their role in this distinctive genre of cartooning.

Although Norkin boasts that he is not trying to conceal his caricature technique, he does not write about it until the last five pages of his book. His absorbing description of caricature—"to give greater inflection to the personality by taking liberties with proportion"—that only a cartoonist of Norkin's merit can share is inspirational. As with his historical perspective, however, Norkin gives us just enough information on these topics to whet our appetites for more. While Norkin's writing comes up short, his distinctive drawings provide us with a worthwhile resource.

As an aside, if this book goes into a second printing, the editing errors should be corrected. ●

Norkin, Sam. *Sam Norkin: Drawings, Stories.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 1994. xi, 345 p. index. ISBN 0-435-08642-1 pap. $29.95.

Kewpies and Beyond: The World of Rose O'Neill

by Shelley Armitage

Reviewed by Alice Sheppard

In William Murrell's *History of American Graphic Humor*, Rose O'Neill [Latham] is identified as "one of our first really able women social satirists."[1] In spite of this, the depth and richness of O'Neill's art has been largely neglected, and most books and articles about her work are judged "popular rather than scholarly," according to Shelley Armitage, author of *Kewpies and Beyond* (and also the author of *John Held, Jr.: Illustrator of the Jazz Age*). *Kewpies and Beyond* is intended "to provide a critical examination of the connections between genres, literary and artistic forms, and popular and fine art elements by a woman artist [Rose O'Neill] whose tone and intent were often influenced by her humor" (ix). Armitage, a professor of American Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, suggests that O'Neill's work should be addressed through interdisciplinary scholarship; it should be examined in terms of feminist themes; and that it should promote an understanding of American culture, when viewed through tools of "contextual criticism." To accomplish her goals, Armitage relies on O'Neill's "fiction, autobiography, and personal letters" as well as her art.

The book's twin emphases on imagery and humor are developed in an introduction on "Women's Humor and Comic Art" and chapters on "Subversive Imagery," "Alternative Imagery," and "Reciprocal Imagery." The two additional chapters are a biography of O'Neill, "Imagining Herself Richly," and the conclusion, "A New American Mythology."

In "Subversive Imagery: The Comic Illustrations," the author suggests that O'Neill's Irish heritage and adolescent exposure to African American neighbors in rural Missouri conditioned her sympathetic views of minorities and women. Armitage offers the sweeping generalization that O'Neill's visual imagery serves to "subvert recognized and sanctioned images of women, ethnic groups, and children"(ix). She then interjects a discussion of Nancy Walker's hypothesis that women humorists must "confront and subvert the very power that keeps women powerless"(7). The multiple layers of meaning that cartoons entail are ignored, as is the stereotyping that other scholars (such as Helen Goodman[2]) have acknowledged in O'Neill's work—to say nothing of the confusion to the reader who may equate "subversive" with anarchist ideology. Armitage rejects the categorization of O'Neill as a social satirist, preferring "social humorist"(93).

At the height of the suffrage campaign, O'Neill denounced male psychological enslavement of women and upheld the need for the woman artist to liberate her gender through imagery, "to do something glorious"(133). Armitage links these ideas to O'Neill's "titans" (her disturbing and perplexing "private art") and

Kewpies in her discussion of "Alternative Imagery." For Armitage, the asexual Kewpies embody an androgynous ideal (121), and the monster drawings (only three are shown) challenge gender barriers (through "bisexual" anatomy and oversized "earth mothers"). Her use of the terms "androgyny" and "bisexual" run counter to current scholarly use and may perplex the reader. There is little probing analysis into O'Neill's psychology. For example, how does one reconcile the incongruity between O'Neill's affectionate, optimistic, playful personality and her production of what Alexander King termed her "tortured devils and mythical monsters"?[3]

In "Reciprocal Imagery," Armitage examines forms of "high" and "low" art and portrays O'Neill as a creative genius whose work transcended conventional artistic boundaries. O'Neill was proficient in painting, drawing, and sculpture, and, as Goodman pointed out, incorporated stylistic elements from the Pre-Raphaelites, art nouveau, poster art, and the Arts and Crafts Movement in her work. Armitage's discussion is unfortunately flawed by vague statements such as "by amalgamating methods and styles, she [O'Neill] showed how limited is our view when singular . . ." and "If not about progress, her pictures are about process—the necessary reciprocity between schools of art and thought." These statements are muddled and unsubstantiated.

In her final chapter, Armitage purports to uncover "A New American Mythology" in Rose O'Neill's oeuvre. She identifies Kewpieville as "a modern parable" (189), where success is measured by joy produced. Both claims are exaggerated. The Kewpies and their philosophy may be entertaining and appealing—but a case is not well made for their effect on the nation's belief system. The author further tells us that O'Neill's portrayal of children with round heads reveals perfection (199), ignoring the well-known fact that the young of many species (and Disney characters) have large round heads with high foreheads.[4]

Once there was a wizard who was older than the tops of hills, all fairies, gnomes, elves, and goblins had to come when he called, and all such creatures as were in various ways unlikely.
But alas! He was so old that he had gotten over being pleased. No goblin could possibly scare him, no fairy was so lovely as to make him smile.
This was very bad, because he remembered. So he went and got a very young child and called forth some of those beautiful and amusing creatures, and he said, "Oh, very young child, let's take turns looking through your eyes." And the very young child said, "All right."
Then he tried to look through the eyes of the very young child, but nothing scared him, and nothing made him smile.
Then his face was like dead ashes, and he said, "It is your turn."
And the very young child was happy as the towers of heaven are tall.
Arthur Colton.

"The Wizard and the Child" written by Arthur Colton and illustrated by Rose O'Neill for the January 1909 issue of *Cosmopolitan*.

Armitage's book is a panoply of ideas applied to the historical context of O'Neill's social consciousness. Its origins are explored in a fifty-seven page biographical chapter on Rose Cecil O'Neill, 1874-1944, which is written in an engaging style, with vivid detail and interesting anecdotes. Quotations from O'Neill's unpublished autobiography are skillfully interwoven with insights from contemporary and modern sources, and it is here that Armitage is clearly at her best. This is, however, not an exhaustive biography, as dates are given only incidentally, and one must wait until later chapters to learn important details (such as that O'Neill was the *only* female staff cartoonist for the humor magazine *Puck* in the late 1890s.

This book provides a wealth of information and some truly innovative ideas. Given this auspicious foundation, it is disappointing that the scholarship is not more stringent, the presentation more organized, and

the historical connections more thoroughly researched. The reader is seldom given the facts or resources on which Armitage's opinions are based. Editing is careless throughout. For example, an incorrect birth year for O'Neill is given on the back cover; an illustration dated "ca. 1900" has an exact date in the accompanying text; and the *Universalist Review*—no date or title for an article—is ascribed to the Unitarian Church.

In *Keupies and Beyond* Armitage reveals how our impression of O'Neill as a sentimental illustrator and doll creator distorts the reality of a richly talented feminist, whose forays into painting, writing, and sculpture astonished her contemporaries. This she accomplishes, although the meaning of O'Neill's humor takes second place to her interpretation of Kewpie society and values—and even the tantalizing topic of "Women's Humor and Comic Art" is covered in only twelve pages. The author convinces us so well of O'Neill's genius and intriguing life that we wish she had taken longer to research her book, providing a more probing approach, better organization, and more satisfying depth. O'Neill enthusiasts will welcome *Keupies and Beyond* for its American culture approach, but they may need other works such as Goodman's for artistic insights and chronology.

The book contains sixty-nine black and white illustrations that include historical photographs and reproductions of O'Neill's cartoons, drawings, paintings, and sculpture. All are placed—though not specifically discussed—within the text. ●

NOTES

1. William Murrell, *A History of American Graphic Humor*. 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 166.

2. Helen Goodman, *The Art of Rose O'Neill*. Exhibition catalogue. (Chadds Ford, PA: Brandywine River Museum, 1989).

3. Alexander King, "Profiles: Kewpie Doll," *The New Yorker*, 24 November 1934, 24.

4. Konrad Lorenz, "Die angeborenen Formen möglicher Erfahrung," *Zeitschrift für Tierpsychologie* 5(1943): 235-409. Social scientists refer to this dimension as *kindschenschema* or babyishness.

Armitage, Shelley. *Keupies and Beyond: The World of Rose O'Neill*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi. 1994. 227 p. index. bibl. ISBN 0-87805-710-2 hdb. $40.00; 0-87805-711-0 pap. $18.95.

Kitchen Sink Press: The First 25 Years

by Dave Schreiner

Reviewed by Kent Worcester

Kitchen Sink Press has published a rich trove of good comic books over the years. The company was founded in 1970, more or less, and was the creation of a lanky Midwesterner, Denis Kitchen, who wanted to introduce sound business practices to the task of producing underground comix. Within a couple of years KSP had published many of the best artists and writers to emerge out of the underground movement. Kitchen, aided by the efforts of fellow-artist Pete Poplaski and others, published what he liked but had nothing to do with what he did not like, which meant super-hero comics. The company specialized in putting together comic book anthologies, including such classics as *Dope Comix*, *Bizarre Sex*, *Bijou Funnies*, and *Mom's Homemade Comics*. It also went into business with Marvel Comics to bring out the short-lived *Comix Book*.

With the mid-1970s crack-down on headshops, the company was forced to seek out new markets and distribution networks. For the next decade or so, KSP survived by publishing an eclectic mix of post-underground alternative comics and classic reprints. Kitchen was a great fan of comic-strip artist Ernie Bushmiller, and he also championed the work of Will Eisner, Harvey Kurtzman, Milton Caniff, and several other venerable old-timers. By the 1980s, the business was on a sound footing, by virtue of its strong backlist, and the fact that it was publishing an eclectic batch of newer artists such as Donald Simpson, Charles Burns, Mark Schultz, and Reed Waller. More recently, and despite the inevitable ups-and-downs of the comic business, Denis Kitchen and KSP have transformed themselves into major players in the world of mega-entertainment, in part through the company's involvement in *The Crow*, *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs*, and other hot multi-media properties. After a merger with Tundra, Kitchen Sink relocated to Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1993.

From the outset KSP has exhibited a distinctive flair for publicity and promotion. Aside from comic books and graphic novels, Kitchen Sink Press has issued buttons, records, posters, portfolios, t-shirts, trading cards, chocolate bars, Christmas cards, and what is possibly the world's first gay greeting card, written and drawn by Howard Cruse. Furthermore, the company has offered a valuable lifeline to numerous starving artists, and has been a bastion of creators' rights. Kitchen's own background as a left-wing comix artist undoubtedly helped him to combine (if not reconcile) the roles of talent-nurturer, pop-culture-canonizer, money-maker, and hell-raiser. (From the zany invitations and pictures reprinted here, it is clear that KSP can throw one hell of a party. The fact that for many years the company operated out of an old barn in rural Wisconsin should tell us something about the kind of neo-hippie enterprise Kitchen and his co-thinkers managed to keep out of bankruptcy court all those many years.)

Kitchen is obviously a complicated character. The time and effort he has put into KSP has taken its toll

on his personal life. His entrepreneurial activities have also put the squeeze on his drawing. For many years the company has been the central focus of Kitchen's creative energies, rather than cartooning. As Alan Moore says in his testimonial comments, published here, "one can only assume that this whole publishing empire thing is some kind of elaborate avoidance ritual to keep him away from the drawing board."

The more interesting tension, however, is between Kitchen's political ideals and his commercial instincts. Kitchen Sink Press was a by-product of the 1960s, of course, and its artists and books did what they could to promote the counter-culture agenda of good vibes, free love, and cheap recreational drugs. But Denis Kitchen was no ordinary hippie. For one thing, his roots were implacably mid-western. His personal style was rather loose, or even whimsical, in comparison to the reproving machismo of late 1960s-early 1970s revolutionaries. At the same time, Kitchen was a professing socialist, of the non-Leninist variety. One of the pictures reprinted here shows Kitchen campaigning for the lieutenant governorship of Wisconsin on the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) ticket in 1970, the same year he founded KSP. Schreiner says that Kitchen received 5,000 votes, "mostly from the east side of Milwaukee." where the SLP once had a sizable constituency. Nothing is said about when (or if) Kitchen abandoned the cause of DeLeonism—Daniel DeLeon, early 20th century pamphleteer, was the chief intellectual guru of the SLP—but this would not be the first time that a former SLPer made a fortune in the world of business.[1]

"Let's Be Honest" from *Snarf* 2 (1972) by Denis Kitchen.

Let's Be Honest
YOU MAY THINK THAT BEING THE HEAD OF AN UNDERGROUND PUBLISHING COMPANY IS A LOT OF FUN. WELL, LEMME TELL YA... IT'S NOT!
RING
THE BOSS
IT'S A SUPREME HASSLE IS WHAT IT IS... EXCUSE ME.
RING
... HELLO. HEF? HOWYA DOIN' BABY? TONIGHT? ... LISTEN, WHY DONCHA COME HERE? SURE! ... AND BRING A LOTTA GIRLS. YEAH... LATER!
LIKE I WAS SAYING... IT AIN'T A BARREL OF MONKEYS. FOR INSTANCE — I HAVE TO SLIP OUTTA MY COMFORTABLE SUIT INTO THESE BELL BOTTOM JEANS CAUSE SOME CARTOONIST IS COMING IN WITH A NEW UNDER-GROUND COMIC BOOK.
OOF!
HE'S HERE, MR. KITCHEN.
HEY! WHAT'S HAPPENIN' ?!
GOT A NEW BOOK HERE.
GROOVY!
CAN I GET AN ADVANCE?
WELL, TIMES ARE TOUGH... BUT I'LL TELL YA WHAT— HERE'S A TWENTY OUTA MY OWN POCKET.
DENIS, YER A SAINT.
MISS CHEEVER— HAVE HIGGINS BRING THE LIMO AROUND. GET THIS BOOK TO THE PRESSES... HAVE 'EM RUN HALF A MILLION. AND WIRE THIS TO MY SWISS ACCOUNT. I GOTTA RUN NOW.
YES SIR.
I TELL YA, HEF... PUBLISHING IS A REAL FUCKIN' HASSLE.
I KNOW WUCHA MEAN.
©Kitchen 1972

This book is a beautiful showcase for what must be considered a unique enterprise, even by the odd-ball standards of the comics business. The book is stuffed with photographs, cartoons, testimonials, and other memorabilia, and features a complete checklist of KSP products issued over the last twenty-five years. The text covers a lot of ground, and benefits enormously by the fact that Schreiner has been associated with the Press virtually from its inception. This is not the book to show someone who has no background in comic books. But for anyone seriously interested in the history of the medium, and in underground comix, it is an essential volume. ●

NOTE

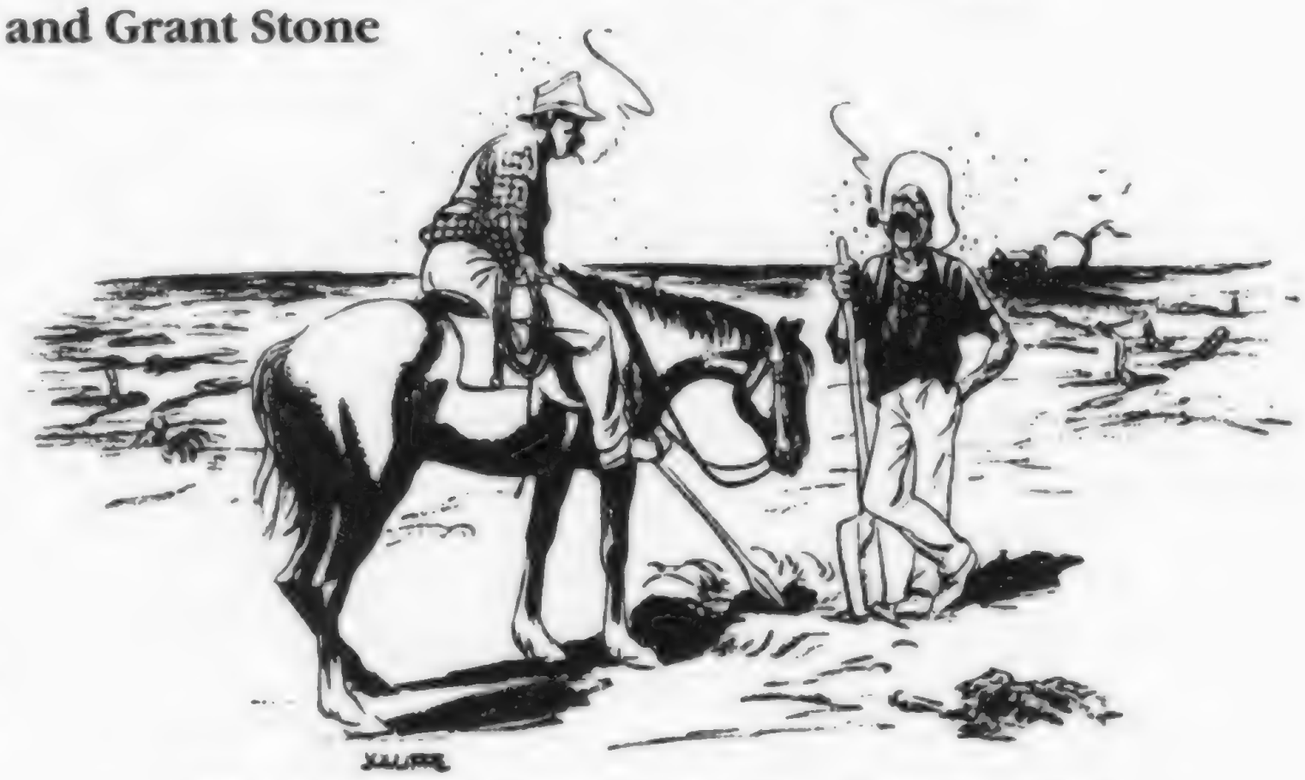
1. For a poignant account of the evolution of the SLP, see Scott McLemee, "The Sect That Time Forgot," *New Politics* 5:1 (Summer 1994), 149-157.

Schreiner, Dave. *Kitchen Sink Press: The First 25 Years*. Northampton, MA: Kitchen Sink Press. 1994. 128 p. index. ISBN: 0-87816-292-5. pap. $11.95. A limited-edition, signed and numbered hardcover edition is available for $25.

Comics in Australia and New Zealand: the Collections, the Collectors, the Creators

Compiled by Toby Burrows and Grant Stone

Reviewed by Ian Gordon



"Wot'll I do if we're invaded? Same as Stalin, o' course—scorched earth!"

Cartoon by Eric Jolliffe from *More About Andy* (1940?), 45.

Conceived and simultaneously published as an issue of the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Serials Librarianship* this small volume of 115 pages offers a glimpse at the Australasian comics scene. The work contains nine essays and a bibliography. Three of the essays discuss Australian comics in a historical context, another three come from collectors and creators, two deal with library collections, and the ninth deals with all of these aspects in a brief discussion of comics in New Zealand.

At heart I suspect the work's purpose is to inform librarians about comics' usefulness as sources of social history, and to promote their collection. In enunciating this theme the contributors out of necessity ruminate on the impact of American culture on Australia. The core of the book then is the articles by Richard Stone on the National Library of Australia's collection of comic books and Pauline Dickinson's on the University of Sydney Library's collection. Reproductions of Australian and American comic book covers from the collection accompany Dickinson's piece. Both these articles provide a good description of the collections and useful information on how the libraries came to acquire them from private collectors. As co-editor Toby Burrows writes in his introduction "without the fans and the collectors, there would be no comics left to study." One disappointment here is that the other co-editor Grant Stone did not contribute a piece on the comics collection of Murdoch University's Library, which he is primarily responsible for establishing.

Terry King's analysis of the forces that shaped Australian adventure comic strips over three decades and Peter Jeffrey's sketch of outback cartoonist Eric Jolliffe's career are tantalising examples of the direction comic scholarship in Australia could take. Both essays ponder the role of comics in shaping modern Australian identity. John Ryan's article, which originally appeared in 1964, is interesting as an historic piece because it foreshadowed his 1979 book *Panel by Panel*, the only published substantial work on Australian comics. Since Ryan's book is out of print and received little circulation outside of Australia this volume may find a niche with those interested in the history of Australian comics.

David Lee Smith's account of the New Zealand comics scene is largely anecdotal as are Ian Scudamore's three pages on a Perth comic book, Graham McGee's "confessions" of a comic collector, and Richard Rae's memoirs of his early comic book fan/entrepreneurial days. Of these four pieces I find Rae's the most piquant because he reveals so much of the *mentalatie* of the fan who has transformed an adolescent interest into a lifetime career. Rae's enthusiasm for the medium is matched by his determination to make a living off comics. The bibliography of further reading on Australian comics by Toby Burrows is more or less complete, although he misses my 1993 *Journal of Australian Studies* article on the comic strip icon Ginger Meggs, and *Drawing From Life*, Vane Lindesay's 1994 history of the Black and White artists' club.

Since the publication of Ryan's book in 1979 there has ben a growing interest in comics in Australia. At the time of writing (May 1995) the National Centre for Australian Studies has an exhibition on Australian comic books touring the country and a forthcoming accompanying volume of essays. Such a project would have been impossible without the work of fans and librarians in collecting and preserving comics. Although thin in spots, the work reviewed records that effort and gives an indication of the type of scholarly work that will hopefully follow. ●

Burrows, Toby and Grant Stone, eds. *Comics in Australia and New Zealand: The Collections, the Collectors, the Creators*. New York: Haworth Press. 1994. 115 p. bibl. ISBN 1-56024-664-2 hdb. $24.95.

The Golden Age of Comic Fandom

by Bill Schelly

Reviewed by Salvatore Mondello

Bill Schelly's *The Golden Age of Comic Fandom* will fascinate and inform comic book readers. Written in an entertaining style and richly illustrated, Schelly's book gives a short history of the comic book fan movement of the 1960s and 1970s, the period he designates as fandom's golden age.

Although comic books were popular, especially with boys, as early as the 1930s, they were not considered cultural artifacts that could form the basis for positive and lasting group identities. Teachers often berated students caught carrying comic books, and parents considered them clutter and threw them away. The anti-comic book campaign of the 1950s reached a climax with the publication of Fredric Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent* in 1954. Schelly notes that a few pioneers thought comic books were worth preserving and could provide foundations for positive group affiliations. The author singles out Jerry Bails, a science professor at Wayne State University, as the central figure in a burgeoning fan movement which would transform the hobby into a way of life and a group activity. In 1961, Bails began publishing *Alter-Ego*, the first significant fanzine devoted to comic books.

The development of comic fandom was, as Schelly makes clear, a group effort, and during the 1960s many fans published and read fanzines, put together comic book indices, organized regional and national conventions, appeared as their favorite heroes at conventions, and patronized retailers selling comic books. Fanzines gave amateur comic book writers and artists opportunities for self-expression and peer recognition. According to the author, "The fanzines ushered in a whole realm of amateur comic strips, a viable alternative to pro comics." (94)

A pioneer fanzine devoted completely to amateur comics was G. B. Love's *Fighting Hero Comics*, started in 1963. Parley Holman and Ronn Foss introduced the character Dimension Man in a fanzine, and he was the first super hero created for the fandom movement. This movement, an outgrowth of the youth culture of the 1960s, was a time when young people believed they had a suppressed culture of their own—stimulated perhaps by the feeling of alienation from adult culture that the young of that time felt.

Professional artists, writers, and businessmen understood somewhat belatedly that the fan movement was a fertile field for profit-making. Slick prozines replaced fanzines, and

The cover of the October 1964 issue of *Alter Ego* was created by Biljo White.

conventions, especially those in New York City and San Diego, began to feature professional comic book writers and artists rather than amateurs. By the mid-1960s, Stan Lee of Marvel Comics "went out of his way to court comicdom and the older comic book reader." (75) By 1970 the first *Comic Book Price Guide* by Bob Overstreet appeared. Comic books were indexed and graded, and investors soon transformed them into collectibles, with many sporting higher and higher price tags. In contrast, earlier "fannishness" was linked, according to Schelly, to the idea of non-profit enterprises. Indeed, he believes fans came together as a "brotherhood."

Did the fan movement succumb to the entrepreneurs? Schelly does not think so. He believes the golden age of comic fandom "was an experience that has left us a legacy of indelible memories." (135) Schelly has established the Comic Fandom Archive, his private collection, to preserve this heritage. My personal view is that in the 1960s, fandom's commitment to a positive view of comic books and to the social networks the movement spawned helped to create an American identity based on the cultures of youth. Schelly's book is a pioneering effort to understand this movement. Future historians will need to explain why the fantasy worlds created in the comic books of the 1960s brought fans together in this phenomenon. ●

Schelly, Bill. *The Golden Age of Comic Fandom*. Seattle, WA: Hamster Press. 1995. 138 p. index. ISBN 0-9645669-0-7 pap. $11.95.

Dictionary of British Cartoonists and Caricaturists 1730-1980

Compiled by Mark Bryant and Simon Heneage

Reviewed by Draper Hill

When is a dictionary not a dictionary? When it is a list? Why is a dictionary? To provide a comprehensive inventory of every jot and tittle one might wish to know within a given category? Sounds reasonable—but let's not be greedy about it.

Perhaps the central difficulty of this book is not with Mark Bryant and Simon Heneage, a pair of industrious English gentlemen who have labored long to produce what is assuredly the first, and thus arguably the most definitive, biographical dictionary of British cartoonists and caricaturists. Covering the impressive span of years between 1730 and 1980, it is certainly an engaging and useful reference work. Maybe the problem rests with the publisher who decided that the book might best be promoted on its dust jacket as a dictionary, "unique" and "comprehensive," to satisfy "the enduring public appetite for cartoons and caricatures in Britain." The book is also a tad impaired by its hefty price of $54.95 for some 252 pages: fatter than the traditional "slender volume" of poetry, but rather skinnier than your lightweight novel.

It is reassuring to learn that Bryant has impressive credentials in publishing (specialist reference works), and that he is honorary secretary of the British Cartoonists Association. Heneage, a former bookseller and consultant to Sotheby's as well as the founder of the (British) Cartoon Art Trust, is introduced as the possessor of "the largest collection of cartoons and books on cartooning in Britain." Much of their achievement is entirely salutary, particularly to anyone with a depth of experience or curiosity in the British field of the mid-twentieth century. How interesting to know that Bill Papas, Low's successor on the *Manchester Guardian* who dropped off most of our radar screens about 1969, has been living and illustrating in Portland, Oregon, since 1984. Or that Abu (Abu Abraham), editorial cartoonist for the Sunday *London Observer* from 1956 to 1966, sat in the upper house of India's parliament from 1972 to 1978. Doubtless true is the editor's concern that historically, pictorial satirists have hardly had a fair deal from obituary writers of past centuries. They assert that the same is true to a lesser extent for the twentieth century, especially as regards artists working in the 1930s and 1940s.

The book's preface commences, unfortunately in my view, with a quote attributed in the text to King Charles I when some caricatures were shown to him: "Take them away. I do not understand these madde designes." If there is any proof that Charles I ever said such a thing, I have never been able to find it. Nor could the legendary historian of British caricature, the late M. Dorothy George. The authors then go on to lament that James Gillray (1756-1815), a natural choice for "father" of modern editorial caricature and described in his time as "the foremost living artist in all of Europe," is a man whose life and character is unknown today. Perhaps the current reviewer is a bit prickly on this point, but as the author of three books on Gillray including a 1965 biography cited in the appropriate entry, I can only assume some-

one did not do his homework. The Gillray entry, contributed by Heneage, concludes with a bit of shallow flippancy which is all too characteristic of the style of this book: "[David] Low's words could well stand as Gillray's justification, 'understand, we cartoonists are not here to pass honest judgement but to purvey matter the other side doesn't like.'" Notice the "could well stand" which effectively disposes of Gillray as a satirist and artist of principle. Surely Low never pronounced such a judgement on Gillray, but Heneage makes this quote (like scores of others in his dictionary, devoid of any citation) stand as the last, damning word on England's first, greatest, and most contradictory editorial cartoonist. Given the opportunity, I could quote, and cite, any number of assessments of Gillray by David Low which take a glowing and diametrically opposed view.

On occasion, these closing benedictions take the opportunity to twit an earlier authority for a singular flight of verbiage, as in the case of "historian" John Geipel on the *Punch* cartoonist Ionicus [J. C. Armitage], who characterized the latter's work as "meticulously executed drawings incised with pellucid linearity." Repeated recourse to Geipel's truly dreadful, spectacularly slipshod 1972 survey, *The Cartoon*, does little to inspire confidence. One wishes repeatedly for Bryant and Heneage to place more faith in their own words and instincts.

Detail from the dust jacket of *Dictionary of British Cartoonists and Caricaturists 1730-1980.*

One also hopes that subsequent editions might expand and annotate the rudimentary bibliographical listing into a more useful appendage than the present one; and perhaps to accord more attention to figures who proved influential in the British empire. One expects the listing for Sir Gordon Minhinnick (1902-1992), not only because of his birth in Cornwall, but also for his long distinction as premier cartoonist in New Zealand, where he moved at age nineteen. (He was, as the entry notes, offered Low's chair on the *Evening Standard* in 1950, but declined to leave New Zealand.) For some of the same reasons, it is surprising not to find Duncan Macpherson (1924-1993) of the *Toronto Star*, a towering volcanic and original figure who was surely the most admired and influential caricaturist ever to cartoon for the English language press in Canada. Not only was MacPherson deeply influenced by the example of Low while serving in London during World War II, but he, too, was courted by Beaverbrook for the same Low chair (then occupied by Vicky) during the early 1960s. Like Minhinnick, Macpherson also declined.

The absence of Sir William Dobell (1899-1970) is conspicuous; not only because this distinguished Australian painter spent his formative thirties in London, but because his "serious" work was dominated by the essence and spirit of caricature. A similarly strange omission occurs in the case of Feliks Topolski (1907-1989), a singularly gifted Polish painter and satirical draftsman who lived and worked in London for the last five-and-a-half decades of his life. Early in this period, his caricature and wartime reportage invited comparison with Daumier; and from 1953 to 1979, he published *Topolski's Chronicle*, a large broadsheet on whatever individuals and events struck his fancy.

For the most part, the figures

included by Bryant and Heneage are less debatable than those they omit or overlook. Naturally Arnold Roth (1929-) is "in," although no mention is made of the fact that he was Mr. Punch's American, a regular contributor for many years. So is David Levine (born in Brooklyn in 1926) "in," although no explanation for his presence in this compilation appears beyond his immense worldwide influence, and his having contributed work to the Sunday *Times* (London).

You look in vain, except in the bibliography, for any reference to James P. Malcolm (born at Philadelphia in August 1767, thus a British citizen at the time, and a fierce Loyalist to George III to boot). Malcolm relocated to London in 1784, where he lived until his death in April 1815. He was the author of the very first crude history of the genre, *Art of Caricaturing* which appeared in London in 1813 with 158 pages of text and thirty etched illustrative plates by himself. "It occurred to the author of the following sheets," he began, "that the Art of Caricaturing having reached a degree of perfection which has rendered it one of the means for the correction of vice and improper conduct, it became a fit subject for a historical sketch of its progress." Malcolm was politically timid and his copies of work by active and earlier London caricaturists show no particular virtuosity. His ambitions were in the direction of "the liberal branches of history and landscape painting" where he appears to have received no encouragement. Otherwise his credentials appear to have been dull but impeccable, surely worth an entry in this latest work addressed to the subject.

There are more than a few perplexing matters of selection and national identity. Thomas Nast contributed five important color caricatures of American subjects to *Vanity Fair* (London) in 1872. James Montgomery Flagg (1877-1960) supplied them plates of McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt while studying art in London in 1899 and 1902. Neither artist appears. Nor do regular European contributors to the weekly press like Adriano Cecioni and Theobald Chartran. Not even J. J. Tissot (1836-1902), a Frenchman resident in St. John's Wood and a mainstay of *Vanity Fair* in 1869 and 1871 makes his way in. Granted this sort of speculation can be extended *ad infinitum*, but I believe a serious case can be made for "foreigners" whose work was published in Great Britain or whose influence was felt there. Londoners like Frank Bellew (1828-1888), Thomas Butler Gunn (1826-1904) are not mentioned; and the Waud brothers, Alfred and Will, who tried with varying success to work in England before becoming fixtures in the New York press of the 1850s and 1860s are ignored. Of the group of British contributors to the nineteenth century American press, the only figure specified is the shadowy William Newman (c. 1812-1871), an early contributor to *Punch* apparently sent packing therefrom for a reported "lack of breeding" about 1859. Newman was active in New York in the late 1850s and early 1860s when his initial "N" was frequently confused with young Thomas Nast's. Heneage does not place him in New York before 1864, following the lead of M. H. Spielmann's 1895 *History of Punch*.

A subsequent edition of this work might usefully focus attention on cartoonists working in Ireland. If not Charles E. Kelly (CEK), prominent in *Dublin Opinion* after its inception in 1922, then surely Thomas Fitzpatrick, who contributed huge fold-out colored cartoon supplements to the *Dublin Weekly Freeman* in the 1890s. By April 1922, the related *Freeman's Journal* ("Ireland's National Newspaper") had evolved into a six-page mimeographed effort sporting a full first-page cartoon signed SHEMUS. I have long wondered who he was, and what might have happened to him. Surely that is one of the reasons people might turn to a dictionary.

Those fascinated by pioneering women cartoonists might wish for a more balanced treatment of Marie Duval (b. Emilie de Tessier c.1851), the principal artist for her husband C. H. Ross (editor of the weekly *Judy*) who created the long-popular strip *Ally Sloper* around 1867. Duval, who drew this feature in London during the late 1860s and for much of the 1870s, did so with imagination and flair. She deserves rather better than the lone sentence in her husband's entry accorded her by Heneage.[1]

Attempting a review of anything so subjective and wide-angled as this type of survey is something like shooting fish in a barrel. One can proceed indefinitely until he runs out of space or sportsmanship. [I must say I looked for Frank Horrabin (active 1921-1960s), creator of *Dot and Carrie*. He is not to be found. Nor is genial George Hickson, "Hickey" of the 1950s and early 1960s.] For all kinds of good reasons, Paul Rigby is "in," but Pat Oliphant is not. Ranan Lurie is properly "in," but W. J. Linton (1812-1898, English artist, engraver, occasional graphic satirist) is not.

On balance there is a great deal of entertaining and good material here. The numerous illustrations are well-chosen and varied. With luck, reactions from readers, institutions and other interested parties will help later editions to expand in any number of user-friendly ways. More pictures, and more on practice which does not get down to brushes, pen nibs, and drawing papers, would be helpful. Perhaps more direct quotes from cartoonists on their own work and evolution could be included. The book might be less formulized, livelier, and more humorous. These are constructive challenges seldom dangled before a lexicographer. After all, it was Dr. Johnson himself who defined the latter as a"harmless drudge" and a "Grub Street hack." But then, he was kidding. ●

NOTE

1. See pages 316-319 of David Kunzle's *History of the Comic Strip: The Nineteenth Century* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990) for a more complete description of Duval's work.

Bryant, Mark, and Simon Heneage, comp. *Dictionary of British Cartoonists and Caricaturists 1730-1980.* Hants, England: Scholar Press. 1994. xvii, 252 p. bibl. ISBN 0-85967-976-4 hdb. $54.95. [distributed in the United States by Ashgate Publishing Co., Brookfield, VT]

exhibition review

Featuring the Funnies: One Hundred Years of the Comic Strip

An Exhibition at the Library of Congress, Washington, DC
5 May - 12 August 1995

Reviewed by Rosemary Gallick

To commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the American comic strip, the Library of Congress assembled approximately ninety original drawings and published comic strips for this exhibit. Easily accessible to the general public, the exhibit was displayed in the foyer of the James Madison Building. Bright, flashy headings lured visitors down the corridor where the works were displayed on the left and right. Colorful flags hung from the ceiling, each with the portrait of a famous character from the funnies such as Tarzan, Charlie Brown, and Nancy.

The goal of the exhibit was ambitious: to display drawings representative of the first century of the comic strip. Given the wide spectrum of the show, artistic styles varied substantially from simple pen and ink drawings to complex compositions with meticulous cross-hatching and linear detail. Works of legendary cartoonists such as Richard Outcault, Lyonel Feininger, and Winsor McCay, as well as Milton Caniff, Burne Hogarth, Chester Gould, and Hal Foster were shown. Special attention was given to women cartoonists from pioneers such as Grace Drayton, Virginia Huget, and Dale Messick, to contemporary cartoonists Cathy Guisewite and Lynn Johnston. Other recent comic strips displayed were by Charles Schulz, Garry Trudeau, Hank Ketcham, and Gary Larson.

Although there was no poster or individual brochure describing *Featuring the Funnies*, a twenty-four-page catalogue by Harry L. Katz and Sara W. Duke (with an introduction by Mort Walker), was available for $7.95 at the Library of Congress gift shop. Full of illustrations, the catalogue paralleled the exhibit format, and provided a comprehensive checklist of all items displayed.

The exhibit was arranged topically, rather than chronologically. Its subdivisions were entitled "Birth of the Yellow Kid," "Child's Play," "Family Matters," "Working Women," "Love Story," "Home Front," "Crime Pays," "Cartoon Stereotypes," "Masterpiece Theater," "Adventures in Time and Space," "Politics as Usual," "Dream Worlds," and "Gag!" Each heading was accompanied by a narrative providing historical perspective and comments showing how the chosen comic strips reflected the times in which they were created. Only the work of a few cartoonists, such as Al Capp's *Li'l Abner* and Bud

I'M LIVING AT THE FRATERNITY HOUSE, INSTEAD OF HOME, BECAUSE YOU GET MORE OF REAL COLLEGIATE LIFE THERE
YOU'VE GOT A GREAT FRIEND IN YOUR ROOM--MATE, TOO--HE SAYS HE THINKS THE WORLD OF YOU
HE CONGRATULATED ME ON BEING ENGAGED TO YOU --HE THINKS YOU'RE THE BRIGHTEST, FINEST, MOST CLEAN-CUT BOY IN THIS COLLEGE
© 1931, King Features Syndicate, Inc., Great Britain rights reserved.
HE SURE MADE ME FEEL AWFULLY PROUD THAT I'M ENGAGED TO YOU, BELIEVE ME, HE'S FOR YOU
GAW, WHEN DID HE TELL YOU ALL THIS?
OH WE SAT OUT IN HIS CAR UNTIL TWO A.M. THIS MORNING, JUST TALKING ABOUT YOU !
11-12

Chic Young (1901-1973), *Blondie*, 12 November 1931. Ink, pencil, and blue crayon on layered paper board. Copyright 1931 by King Features Syndicate. Caroline and Erwin Swann Collection of Caricature and Cartoon (42) LC-USZ62-94799. Reproduced from the collections of the Library of Congress.

Fisher's *Mutt and Jeff*, were presented in more than one category. The topical format caused brief confusion for some viewers who looked for a starting point, planning to go from decade to decade. Once it became clear that the exhibit was arranged by subject, there was less crowding, and spectators could be sure to see the comic strips of most interest to them. The sub-divisions thus became mini-exhibitions on specialized topics.

The exhibit was successful in depicting the evolution of comic strips during the past century, and it clearly showed changing attitudes towards race, gender, war, work, and family values. Thanks go to the Library of Congress for mounting a fine exhibition that represented the broad range of American comic strip art. Works shown came from the Caroline and Erwin Swann Collection of Caricature and Cartoons (acquired by the Library in the 1970s), the George Sturman Collection (acquired in 1992), several contemporary pieces borrowed from the International Museum of Cartoon Art in Boca Raton, Florida, and works donated by individual cartoonists. ●

Oliphant in Washington, Rigby in New York: Two Australians Loose in America

Embassy of Australia, Washington, DC
22 June - 10 August 1995

Reviewed by Richard Samuel West

In the old days, Australia imported trouble-makers. Now it appears that trouble-makers are among its leading exports. For six weeks this past summer, the Embassy of Australia hosted a show of the cartoon work of two of its country's most famous sons, Pat Oliphant, Universal Press Syndicate, and Paul Rigby, *New York Post*. Both artists, though Australian to the core, have formed a beach-head on America's shores and have no intention of leaving.

Each cartoonist was represented by twenty editorial cartoons, the vast majority of which were drawn within the last three years. Taken together, the works form a fascinating study in similarities and contrasts. The similarities are striking. Rigby in Australia was, if not Oliphant's mentor, then certainly a primary influence. We see it especially in the stage-like settings they construct for their cartoon dramas. Both men consider their cartoons as theater: they think about their horizontal space in literal, naturalistic terms and populate their stages with recognizable people, either actual politicians or types. They differ from a theater director in only one important way: they want most if not all of their actors to look ridiculous most if not all of the time.

Anarchy is the show's philosophical subtext. The two artists exhibit an anarchist's distaste and disrespect for all forms of power, from the President of the United

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States to the subway cop. Because we live in an anarchistic age, this aspect of their works would not strike most viewers as daring or different. But that black outlook of not taking sides and saying to hell with you all is distinctively Australian, not American, and was certainly shocking thirty-one years ago when Oliphant arrived in Denver. That it is so much a part of the American psyche today reflects just how much of a pioneer (for good or for bad) Oliphant was and why both artists seem so at home here these days.

After getting past the obvious, the contrasts between their works are perhaps more pronounced than their similarities. Rigby is the physical comedian of cartoonists. His work depicts highly exaggerated, overdrawn situations, which he tries to milk for maximum comic effect. A river is not just polluted, it is jammed with rotting, stinking debris. There is not one or two gunmen on a city bus but dozens, all shooting off their guns at the same time. The Islamic cleric charged with masterminding the Trade Center bombing is not merely well-treated in prison, he is treated like royalty. This style of cartooning has its fans, but I come away from Rigby's work thinking that he could benefit from a bit of subtlety.

Oliphant once drew like Rigby and even thought like Rigby, but he has lapped his senior many times on the track of artistic development. Whereas Rigby overworks his art, often creating a visual mess, Oliphant has long abandoned duotone paper for the more satisfying simplicity of solids and white space. At their best, Oliphant's compositions are elegant. Rigby rarely draws recognizable public figures. He intends his humor to be generic—"Isn't this a crazy world"—but in doing so denies his work bite. Oliphant, on the other hand, revels in caricature. His Dole, for instance, is giving his Nixon of yore a run for the title of Evil Incarnate. You can debate whether Dole is as sinister a figure as Nixon was, but you cannot ignore Oliphant's depiction of the GOP front-runner—it challenges you to give this man and his agenda some thought, which is the absolute most we can hope for from a caricature.

Rigby gets comic mileage out of fairly universal observations about urban existence: it's crowded, it's dirty, it's violent, it's absurd. But precisely because these observations are universal, they do not seem to be rooted especially in the American experience. You get the feeling he could be faxing in a lot of these cartoons from Bangkok. Perhaps this odd remoteness explains why even though he has been here for fifteen years virtually no one in America is familiar with his work. Oliphant, however, has become an honorary American, whether he likes it or not. You cannot be pissed off for thirty years at the goings on in this country and not be marked by the experience. The passion and commitment that he brings to his work has kept him, even after three decades, at the top of his profession.

The show itself had an austere, institutional feel to it. The cartoons were matted, framed, and mounted in pairs or foursomes on unpretentious panels three feet by six feet in a bare-bones reception area just off the Embassy's main lobby. Perhaps the Australians are supreme ironists and intended the institutional feel of this show to emphasize the idea that the famous sons whose work they celebrate had indeed, as the show title suggests, escaped. If that is the case, lucky for them. Lucky for us. ●

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inks

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Basic endnote style is as follows:

1. Rebecca Zurier, *Art for The Masses* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 89. [Note that no abbreviation preceeds the page numbers.]

2. Alice Sheppard, "There Were Ladies Present: American Women Cartoonists and Comic Artists in the Early Twentieth Century," *Journal of American Culture* 7 (Fall 1984): 38-48.

3. Bill Blackbeard and Martin Williams, eds. *The Smithsonian Collection of Newspaper Comics* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), 12.

4. George Newton Gordon, "Can Children Corrupt Our Comics?" in *The Funnies: An American Idiom* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), 158-166.

5. Edwin McDowell, "America Is Taking Comic Books Seriously," *New York Times*, 31 July 1988, E8.

Style for second references:

1. Zurier, *Art for the Masses*, 66.
2. Sheppard, "There Were Ladies Present," 44.
3. Gordon, "Can Children Corrupt Our Comics?" 164.

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